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A FAMILIAR SURVEY OF THE *CHRISTIAN RELIGION*, AND OF HISTORY

AS CONNECTED WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY, AND WITH ITS PROGRESS TO THE PRESENT TIME.

INTENDED PRIMARILY
FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS OF EITHER SEX,
DURING THE COURSE OF
PUBLIC OR OF PRIVATE EDUCATION.

By THOMAS GISBORNE, A.M.

"Jeſus ſaith to Peter, Simon, ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me?—He "ſaith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knoweſt that I love thee. Jeſus "ſaith unto Him, Feed my Lambs." JOHN, xxi. 15.

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1799.



TO THE REVEREND

BENJAMIN HEATH, D.D.

FELLOW OF ETON COLLEGE, ETC.

DEAR SIR,

IF I venture to aſſert that more than cuſtomary attention might advantageouſly be allotted to the inculcation of Chriſtian principles and knowledge on the youth of this country; let me not be thought deſirous of loading their inſtructors with harſh and indiſcriminate cenſure.

My own perſonal experience might lead me to a more equitable concluſion. Nearly ſix of the earlier years of my education were conſigned to the care of a clergyman (*a*); whoſe life exemplified the religious leſſons, which he endeavoured to impreſs on his pupils. The years intervening between private tuition and the univerſity were paſſed at the very eminent public

(*a*) The Rev. John Pickering, of Mackworth near Derby.

ſchool (*b*), over which you then preſided. I recollect with pleaſure that the head claſs, which was under your immediate ſuperintendence, was regularly occupied during one morning in the common days of the week in the ſtudy of ſome book of a religious nature. Nor was this the only effort pointed to the ſame end in the conduct of the ſchool. But I fear that many young perſons, if ſummoned from ſeminaries of repute to a public examination, would give a better account of the fabled wanderings of Ulyſſes and Æneas than of the heaven-directed journeyings of Moſes and Saint Paul; and would diſplay a more intimate acquaintance with the fortunes of Athens and Rome, than with the hiſtorical progreſs of a religion deſigned to be their ſupreme comfort and guide through life, and the means of acquiring eternal happineſs.

The principal fault, when faults exiſt, is not in the preceptor, but in the parent. The former is to water the plant; the latter muſt ſow the ſeed. But how often does the parent limit his concern for the beſt intereſts of his children to the decorum of mere morals: without impreſſing on their minds, perhaps without

(*b*) At Harrow on the Hill.

feeling

feeling on his own, a firm and habitual conviction, that there is no ſtable foundation on which morality can reſt except a Chriſtian fear and love of God! How often does the parent expend his ſolicitude in unremitting efforts to fit his children for worldly eminence; to prepare them to make their way as politicians, as merchants, as followers of lucrative profeſſions; to be ſkilful ſeamen, intrepid ſoldiers, men of learning, of taſte, of accompliſhments, and what the world is pleaſed to call "men of honour:" regardleſs of the duty of training them up as ſervants of a God of holineſs, and diſciples of a crucified Saviour!

A work intended to facilitate the attainment of the moſt important knowledge will experience, I am confident, your favorable acceptance. I offer it to you with additional ſatisfaction, as it affords to me an opportunity of conveying to you an aſſurance that I retain a grateful remembrance of your inſtructions.

I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your obliged and faithful ſervant,

THOMAS GISBORNE.

YOXALL LODGE near LICHFIELD,
Nov. 11, 1799.

PREFACE.

AMONG perſons who are convinced that youth, the ſpring-time of life, is the ſeaſon when the ſeeds which are to occupy and fill the heart are to be ſown; and who regard the acquiſition of eternal happineſs through Jeſus Chriſt as the great object of human exiſtence; it is a common, and I fear, a juſt complaint, that in any mode education ſufficient attention is too ſeldom devoted to religion.

Of late years much has been done, and ably done, to facilitate the communication of religious knowledge to youth. Many

excellent elementary works, having for their object the explanation of ſcriptural hiſtory, and ſcriptural doctrines, in a manner at once inſtructive and engaging to the opening mind of the pupil, have been given to the public: and they have been received with the gratitude which the writers merited. Let me not be ſuſpected of a diſpoſition to detract from the value of thoſe works, the circulation and uſe of which I wiſh to ſee every day more widely extended, when I venture to obſerve, that an additional treatiſe on a plan ſomewhat enlarged has appeared to me to be wanting; a treatiſe which might fitly intervene between the peruſal of books of the claſs to which I have alluded, and the ample range of reading ſcarcely to be expected but from the leiſure and induſtry of manhood. The deficiency which

which I conceived to exiſt, I have endeavoured in the following pages to ſupply.

My intention has been to lay before the reader a familiar and compendious view of the Chriſtian religion, and of the principal hiſtorical events connected with its introduction and progreſs, its corruption and reformation; including a conciſe account of the ſcriptures of the old and new Teſtaments, and a ſummary of the evidences of the truth of Chriſtianity, together with ſome remarks on forms of church government and religious eſtabliſhments. Bearing in mind that I have been addreſſing myſelf to natives of Great Britain; I have been ſolicitous to draw the attention of the reader, wherever the ſubject afforded a fit opportunity, to events or circumſtances which have had a particular influence on his own country; and by rendering

dering him acquainted with the principles on which its religious inſtitutions are eſtabliſhed, to guard him betimes from being haſtily prejudiced againſt thoſe inſtitutions by miſrepreſentations or groundleſs objections. I have endeavoured, on ſuitable occaſions, to obviate, without entering too deeply into argument, ſome of thoſe cavils of ſcepticiſm and infidelity which a young perſon may probably hear; and thus to lead him to withhold implicit confidence from others, which he may afterwards have to encounter. Throughout the whole work it has been my predominant deſire to direct the acquiſition of knowledge to its proper purpoſe; the eſtabliſhment and confirmation of Chriſtian views, motives, and practice through life.

I may truſt that the candour of the public, which I have repeatedly experienced

enced reſpecting other works, will be extended to the preſent, perhaps, more humble, yet I would hope, under the bleſſing of God, not leſs uſeful attempt. My objects in drawing up this performance would be abundantly anſwered, if it ſhould be deemed worthy of being placed as a manual in the hands of the youth of both ſexes during their education at home or in public ſeminaries. I am alſo willing to perſuade myſelf that it may prove a convenient ſummary to many perſons of all ages, when they happen not to have leiſure and opportunity for the peruſal of larger works.

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A FA-

A FAMILIAR SURVEY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

SUMMARY VIEW OF THE STATE OF MANKIND FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD TO THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM.

THE eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity was the great object, to which the ſeveral diſpenſations of Divine Providence, intervening between the creation of the world and the birth of Chriſt, were deſigned to be ſubſervient. If therefore we are ſolicitous clearly to comprehend the nature of the Chriſtian Religion, and fully to perceive the magnitude of the bleſſings which it offers

to every perſon who ſincerely embraces and faithfully obeys it: our attention ought in the firſt place to be directed to the original ſituation of the parents of the human race; and to thoſe ſucceſſive events, whether in the extraordinary dealings of God with man, or in the civil hiſtory of particular nations, which were evidently calculated to prepare the way for the advent of the great Redeemer.

God (*a*), ſaith the ſcripture, created man in his own image. Wherein did this reſemblance of man to his maker conſiſt? The anſwer to that queſtion muſt be derived from the ſacred writings. The true explanation of the counſels of God can be obtained only from the word of God. Some perſons, obſerving that after the Almighty had ſaid, "Let us make man in "our own image, after our likeneſs," he immediately ſubjoined; "and let them "have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, "and over the fowl of the air, and over

(*a*) Gen. i. 27.

" the cattle, and over all the earth, and over " every creeping thing that creepeth upon " the earth (*b*);" have concluded that the image of God impreſſed upon man conſiſted in the ſovereign authority delegated to mankind over the whole inferior creation. This opinion may not be deſtitute of truth. Yet it ſeems to overlook the principal circumſtance indicated by the expreſſion under conſideration. The moſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the Supreme Being is holineſs. And we have ſcriptural grounds for inferring, that the primitive uprightneſs and purity of man was the feature in his ſoul, which conſtituted his likeneſs to his Maker. St. Paul, exhorting the Epheſians to labour for that radical change of heart which Chriſtianity requires in her followers; a change from the corrupt frame of mind natural to fallen man to one reſembling the ſtate of innocence and happineſs in which Adam was created; uſes theſe remarkable words: " Put on the new man, " which after God" (that is, after the image

(*b*) Gen. i. 26.

of God) " is created in righteouſneſs and " true holineſs (*c*)." And when addreſſing his Coloſſian converts on the ſame ſubject, " Ye," ſaith he, " have put on the " new man, which is renewed in know- " ledge," (the knowledge of righteouſneſs,) " after the image of him that created " him (*d*)." The reſemblance therefore which man originally bore to God conſiſted chiefly if not entirely in holineſs and righteouſneſs, ſimilar in kind, though infinitely inferior in degree, according to the diſtance between the Creator and the created, to the holineſs and righteouſneſs of his heavenly Father.

But this bleſſed ſtate was of ſhort continuance. Enſnared by the Devil, who is repeatedly denominated in the Scriptures " the Old Serpent, Satan," (the Adverſary,) " who deceiveth the whole (*e*) world;" and is expreſsly declared by our Saviour to have been a " murderer from the begin-

(*c*) Epheſ. iv. 24. (*d*) Coloſſ. iii. 10.
(*e*) Rev. xii. 9. and xx. 2.

" ning,

" ning, the father of lies, who abode not " in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in " him *(f)*;" our firſt parents concurred in breaking that ſingle commandment, the obſervance of which God had enjoined as the teſt of their obedience. They ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; that fruit which taught them the difference between good and evil, by rendering them acquainted with evil, which until that hour they never had known. Thus they annulled the covenant between them and their Maker. They forfeited all claim to every bleſſing which they had antecedently poſſeſſed. They ſtripped themſelves of all title to every favour, which their Creator had previouſly given them hopes of receiving from his bounty. For all was to depend on the ſtedfaſtneſs of their obedience to the original commandment. They incurred the penalty of death; the penalty, which from the beginning had been announced to them as annexed to the breach of that command-

(f) John, viii. 44.

ment. They became obnoxious to whatever puniſhment, in addition to death, the loſs of their exiſtence, the unerring juſtice of God ſhould perceive to be merited by their tranſgreſſions. They loſt their uprightneſs and purity of heart, the image and likeneſs of Jehóvah in which they were created: and thus were become more ſimilar in the diſpoſition and frame of their ſouls to the Author of evil to whom they had ſubmitted, than to the glorious God of holineſs whom they had diſobeyed.

The Supreme Being in pronouncing judgement on his guilty creatures mercifully ſuſpended the execution of the penalty of death. Excluſive of the ſentence uttered againſt the Serpent, the import of which will ſhortly be conſidered; he impoſed on Eve the pains of child-bearing, and entire ſubmiſſion to the authority of her huſband. On Adam he devolved the laborious cultivation of the earth, now rendered above meaſure productive of plants troubleſome to the huſbandman, and noxious to the crop.

And

And both he expelled from the Garden of Eden, leſt they ſhould put forth their hand, "and take alſo of the tree of life, and eat, "and live for ever (*g*);" leſt by having acceſs to the fruit of the tree of immortality they ſhould be enabled from time to time to counteract the natural tendency of their bodies to decay, and thus hope to evade the unchangeable decree, "Duſt thou art, "and unto duſt ſhalt thou return (*h*)." To prevent any raſh attempt on the part of man to re-enter his original abode, God placed eaſtward of Paradiſe a fiery guard of Angels, "Cherubim and a flaming ſword, which "turned every way, to keep the way of "the tree of life (*i*)."

Perhaps you may be inclined to deem it ſomewhat ſingular, that a circumſtance of a nature apparently ſo trivial as the eating or forbearing to eat of the fruit of a particular tree, ſhould be ſelected by the Divine

(*g*) Gen. iii. 22. (*h*) Gen. iii. 19.
(*i*) Gen. iii. 24.

wiſdom for the trial of the obedience of our firſt parents. You would have expected, it may be, ſome trial of a more grand and dignified caſt; reſembling ſome of thoſe ſplendid demonſtrations of human virtue, which hiſtory records for the admiration of the world. In the firſt place, however, you may be ſatisfied, that the mode of proof which thus ſurpriſes you was perfectly proper, becauſe it was the mode which the Divine wiſdom thought fit to ſelect. If the temptation to tranſgreſs were in your apprehenſion inconſiderable; ceaſe to wonder that one more powerful was not choſen, when you recollect that even this, weak as it was, proved capable of overcoming the religious reſolution of thoſe whom it aſſailed. Reflect further, in the next place, that in the ſituation in which Adam and Eve found themſelves in Paradiſe; the only exiſting individuals of the human race; with every want anticipated; before the ſight or ſound of diſtreſs was known; antecedently to the introduction of arts, and of commerce, and of ſeparate property, and

of

of gradations of rank and power, and of all thoſe habits and inſtitutions of civil ſociety which have proved, ſince the earth became repleniſhed with inhabitants, the moſt efficacious ſtimulants of the paſſions of men, and conſequently the moſt dangerous incentives to ſin; few, if any, of thoſe temptations, by reſiſtance to which from a principle of obedience to the will of God human virtue is now to be evinced, could poſſibly have had an opportunity of preſenting themſelves.

Still however you may think that the puniſhment was diſproportioned to the offence. So ſlight a tranſgreſſion as the gathering of a prohibited fruit to be inſtantly followed by the loſs of the Divine favour, by the forfeiture of exiſtence, by woes and calamities reaching to the lateſt poſterity of the offenders! Recollect then, that this puniſhment, great as it might be, was no new penalty deviſed after the tranſgreſſion. It was that penalty which the tranſgreſſors, fore-warned and fully inſtructed, had

known from the day of their creation to be already ordained as the inevitable conſequence of guilt. Recollect alſo that the direct communication, which the Supreme Being had permitted to take place between himſelf and his creatures, had precluded the poſſibility of a doubt in the minds of Adam and Eve as to the reality of the Divine command. But you judge moſt erroneouſly in terming their tranſgreſſion ſlight. The ſin conſiſted not ſimply in gathering the fruit; but in breaking the commandment of God, who had enjoined them to abſtain from it: the ſingle commandment of him, who of his own free grace had called the offenders into being; had crowned them with innumerable benefits; had put immortality and unimpairable happineſs into their power, ſubject only to the obſervance of one condition; a condition ſo plain as to be incapable of being miſunderſtood, and ſo eaſy of performance as ſcarcely to ſeem to admit the poſſibility of failure. The mode in which diſobedience might be manifeſted was of little moment.

The

The guilt was in the diſobedience itſelf; and was evidently moſt heinous.

Let us now return to the judgement pronounced againſt the Serpent: a judgement not more full of terror to the victorious enemy of mankind than of conſolation to thoſe, whom he had degraded into a ſtate of ſin and miſery. To him, under the emblem of the reptile, whoſe inſtrumentality he had employed in his diabolical machinations, the Divine vengeance foretold diſappointment, and humiliation, and anguiſh, and irrecoverable deſtruction. A future "ſeed of the woman" was darkly announced; who after experiencing ſome temporary injury, equivalent to a bruiſe on the heel, from the power and malignity of the ſerpent, ſhould vindicate the cauſe of man, and the glory of God, by a complete triumph over the adverſary, by "bruiſing the ſerpent's head."

Here there was a direct intimation given to man of the great plan formed and predetermined

determined in the divine counſels for the redemption of the human race through the atoning ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God; who, in reference to this predetermination, is ſtyled in the New Teſtament "the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of "the world (*k*)." To what extent the details of this gracious and ſtupendous plan were then unfolded to Adam, the Scriptures do not explain. Sufficient however was revealed to enable him to look up with humble hope, on the part of himſelf and of his poſterity, to their future deliverer from the dominion of ſin and the grave.

In proceſs of time a firſt-born ſon and other children ſucceſſively encreaſed the family of Adam, now no longer an inhabitant of Paradiſe; children born "in his "own likeneſs, after his image;" with a nature depraved, corrupt, and ſinful, like that of their progenitor; not "in the "likeneſs of God," which the Scriptures almoſt in the ſame ſentence (*l*), as though

(*k*) Rev. xiii. 8. (*l*) Gen. v. 1—3.

it

it were to prevent the poſſibility of miſtaking their meaning reſpecting the image in which the children of Adam were born, again aver to have been that in which Adam was originally formed. Here, according to the analogy which we ſtill ſee ſubſiſting throughout the whole living creation, in which the offspring univerſally inherits and partakes of the nature of the parent; man, become frail and prone to guilt, produced a race frail and prone to guilt like himſelf. The corrupt tree could not but bear corrupt fruit. In like manner the next generation reſembled in its nature that from which it ſprang. Every individual of the human race born or yet to be born, with the ſingle exception of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt when he aſſumed the form of man, inevitably brings with him into the world the nature of fallen Adam. And "as in Adam all die, even ſo in "Chriſt" only ſhall any "be made "alive(*m*)."—"There is none other name

(*m*) 1 Cor. xv. 22.

"under

"under heaven given among men, where-
"by we must be saved (*n*)."

The radical corruption of human nature is one of those truths, which their very plainness renders it the less easy to support by formal proofs. If a person be unmoved by the decisive arguments, which press upon him every moment at every turn; you scarcely know in what manner to address him on the subject. Happily the minds of youth are not thus hardened against fair reasoning and honest conviction. They have not been familiarised with sin sufficiently to have become blind to its inherent enormity. They have not yet been inured by long habits of guilt to "call "evil good, and good evil (*o*)." They are not obstructed with those prepossessions, nor intoxicated with that self-conceit, so common among persons more advanced in life; who have formed to themselves a favorite system, and examine not at all, or without candour, any evidence against it. Let

(*n*) Acts, iv. 12. (*o*) Isaiah, v. 20.

young

young perſons then ſearch the Scriptures, to ſee whether theſe things be ſo or not; and they will find the depravity of human nature inculcated in the ſtrongeſt terms throughout the ſacred writings: and inculcated not only as an undeniable fact, but as the corner-ſtone of Chriſtianity. Let them look diligently into their own minds; and they will be convinced that the continual indiſpoſition to righteouſneſs and proneneſs to tranſgreſſion, which they will diſcover there, can be aſcribed to no other cauſe. Let them behold what paſſes in the world around them; and they will be ſatisfied that the prevailing wickedneſs of mankind can be traced to no other ſource. They will perceive that in this as in every other inſtance reaſon and experience unite in bearing teſtimony to the truth of the word of God.

The natural effects of the Fall were ſoon felt moſt ſeverely in the family of Adam. Cain, his eldeſt ſon, murdered his own brother Abel; murdered him becauſe the

righteouſneſs of Abel procured from Heaven the acceptance of his ſacrifice, while the guilt of Cain cauſed his offering to be rejected by the Lord. The avenging juſtice of God immediately drove Cain from the land; and condemned him to be a wretched vagabond on the face of the earth. Adam had to deplore, in the loſs of two ſons in one day, his original breach of the Divine command.

By our acquaintance with the laws and the tranſactions of the Jews, and alſo with the hiſtory of different Pagan nations, we are made ſo familiar with the practice of ſacrifices, that it does not ſtrike our minds as ſingular. Yet if we regard it as a human invention, ſcarcely any thing can appear leſs capable of an eaſy explanation. How could any man think that to take away the life of an unoffending animal, and to conſume its fleſh in the fire, would be a deed calculated to procure for him the favour of God? If it be difficult to anſwer this queſtion in the caſe of a heathen, much more

difficult

difficult is it in the caſe of Abel. For, as the uſe of fleſh for food was not permitted before the deluge, to ſlaughter an harmleſs animal was an act to which Abel would be unaccuſtomed; and one which, unleſs it were commanded by the Almighty, he would probably eſtimate as a crime. Theſe conſiderations lead us to believe that ſacrifices were of divine inſtitution; and that they were enjoined on the family of Adam and on his individual deſcendents, as we know that they were afterwards made a part of the religious worſhip of the Jewiſh people, principally with a view to raiſe their thoughts and expectations habitually to that effectual atonement, which was to be accompliſhed in the fulneſs of time by the ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt on the croſs. The uſe of ſacrifices thus introduced would gradually extend itſelf among heathen nations.

When the third generation of men had ariſen upon earth, we may conclude that iniquity had ſpread far and wide: for

then the family of Seth, joined in all probability by others of a similar diſpoſition, appear to have been diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of men, on account of their adherence to true religion, by being called "by the "name of the Lord (*p*);" being ſtyled according to the Hebrew idiom, the "ſons," that is to ſay, the followers and ſervants, "of God (*q*)." In proceſs of time, however, the general corruption overwhelmed them alſo. The ſons of God took to themſelves wives of "the daughters of men;" the daughters of the unrighteous offspring of Cain. In conſequence of theſe intermarriages the contagion of iniquity became univerſal. Huſband and wife, parent and child, relation, friend, acquaintance, became the victims of "evil communication," which from thoſe days to the days of St. Paul, and from the days of St. Paul to the preſent hour, has corrupted and "corrupts "good manners (*r*);" and ſeldom more

(*p*) Gen. iv. 26. "Then began men to call themſelves "by the name of the Lord"—as the verſe is rightly tranſlated in the margin of the Bible.

(*q*) Gen. vi. 2. (*r*) 1 Cor. xv. 23.

fatally

fatally than in the caſe of perſons, who unite themſelves by marriage with others whoſe hearts are devoid of true religion. The conſequences of theſe moſt raſh and dangerous connections are emphatically ſtated in few words by the ſacred hiſtorian: "God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man "was great in the earth; and that every "imagination of the thoughts of his heart "was only evil continually.—And the "Lord ſaid, I will deſtroy man, whom I "have created, from off the face of the "earth (*s*)." Yet here again the Divine juſtice was tempered with mercy. The execution of the ſentence was delayed. God declared that the days of man upon earth, the period of trial during which the univerſal deſtruction ſhould be poſtponed that opportunity might be afforded for repentance, ſhould be one hundred and twenty years. But trial was granted in vain. The fatal period drew to its cloſe. "God "looked upon the earth, and behold it was "corrupt; for all fleſh had corrupted his

(*s*) Gen. vi. 5—7.

"way upon the earth. And God ſaid unto "Noah, the end of all fleſh is come before "me (*t*)."

Though the Divine wiſdom reſerves for a future life the great diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments between the righteous and the wicked; yet it frequently diſtinguiſhes even in this world the faithful ſervant of the Almighty by ſignal mercies and bleſſings, while it cruſhes the workers of iniquity with exemplary vengeance. Thus it was on the approach of the deluge: "Noah found grace in the eyes of the "Lord." The cauſe is aſſigned in the next verſe: "Noah was a juſt man, and per-"fect in his generations, and Noah walked "with God (*u*)." So likewiſe when God afterwards ſaid unto Noah, "Come thou, "and all thy houſe into the ark;" he immediately ſubjoins the reaſon of this gracious deliverance; "for thee have I ſeen "righteous before me in this genera-"tion (*v*)." St. Peter, ſpeaking of the

(*t*) Gen. vi. 12, 13. (*u*) Gen. vi. 8, 9. (*v*) Gen. vii. 1.

old

old world, characteriſes Noah by the appellation of "a preacher of righteouſ-
"neſs (w)." From that expreſſion we may conclude that he was not only an example of religion in his own private conduct, but that he publicly proteſted againſt the abandoned depravity of the human race; ſtrenuouſly laboured to rouſe the ſinners to a conviction of their guilt; and denounced againſt the unrepenting world the impending judgements of God. Confiding in the merciful protection of that Power whom he loved and obeyed, he entered the ark with his family; and with thoſe individuals of the animal race, which God had brought to him that they might be preſerved to repleniſh the earth: and "the Lord ſhut him in." Then "were "all the fountains of the great deep broken "up;" the ocean was heaved out of its bed by convulſions and earthquakes; and "the windows of heaven were opened;" floods of rain ruſhed from the ſky: "the "waters prevailed exceedingly upon the

(w) 2 Peter, ii. 5.

"earth; and all the high hills that were "under the whole heaven were covered." The ark, containing the ſole remnants of the human race and of the animated world, floated on the boundleſs deluge.

This awful teſtimony of the Divine indignation againſt ſin took place, as the Scriptures expreſsly affirm, when Noah was ſix hundred years old; and, according to the common computation, one thouſand ſix hundred and fifty ſeven years after the creation of the world, and two thouſand three hundred and forty ſeven years before the birth of Jeſus Chriſt.

At the expiration of one hundred and fifty days the waters were ſo far abated, that the ark reſted on the mountains of Ararat, in Armenia. At the end of ten weeks more the ſummits of the mountains appeared above the ſurface of the flood. At length, on the firſt day of the ſucceeding new year, Noah, after having ſucceſſively ſent forth a raven and a dove, that he might judge,

judge, accordingly as they ſhould return to him or not, of the ſtate of the ground, removed the covering of the ark; and perceived that the ſurface of the earth was dried. And on the twenty-ſeventh day of the ſecond month, after having reſided in the ark one year and ſome days, he and all its inhabitants, by Divine command, deſcended from the frail fabric, in which Omnipotence had preſerved them amid the univerſal deſtruction of their fellow-creatures.

On this ſecond father of mankind, and on his family, the Supreme Being conferred bleſſings and privileges in moſt reſpects ſimilar to thoſe which he had beſtowed on their firſt parents: confirming to them the ſovereignty of the earth and of the inferior animated creation; and in one point enlarging the original grant, by permitting to them the uſe of animal food. To remove the apprehenſions of another deluge, by which it might not be unnatural for them or their deſcendants to be haraſſed;

he ſolemnly declared, that there never ſhould again be a flood to deſtroy the earth. And with the moſt benignant condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of human faith, he further pronounced, that the rainbow, an appearance uniformly produced by drops of falling rain illuminated by the ſun, was ordained to be the ſign of this everlaſting covenant between himſelf and his creatures; and when beheld by him, ſhould for ever bring his promiſe to his remembrance. And in order that he might completely diſſipate the ſuſpicious fears of men, that, if not a deluge, yet ſome other convulſion ſhould afterwards be commiſſioned to ravage the earth and extinguiſh their race; he made known his merciful and unalterable determination: "I will not again curſe the "ground any more for man's ſake—neither "will I again ſmite any more every thing "living, as I have done. While the earth "remaineth, ſeed-time and harveſt, and "cold and heat, and ſummer and winter, "and day and night, ſhall not ceaſe(x)."

(x) Gen. viii. 22.

Shortly

Shortly after the deluge, Noah, in conſequence of the difference between the conduct of his eldeſt and youngeſt ſons towards him, and that of his other ſon Ham, was commiſſioned prophetically to announce to the latter the future ſubjection which the poſterity of Canaan, the child of the offender, ſhould experience under the deſcendants of Shem and Japheth; and to foretel that ſignal bleſſings ſhould attend the race of theſe two righteous men. Among the reaſons for which the prophecy was emphatically detailed by Moſes, we may conclude this to have been one; that it was ſingularly adapted to encourage the children of Iſrael to carry without fear into the land of the Canaanites that impending invaſion, by which the judgements proclaimed by Noah were to be accompliſhed.

In the days of Peleg, who was born about one hundred years after the flood, and was the fourth in deſcent from Shem, "the earth was divided (*y*)." Mankind,

(*y*) Gen. x. 25.

ſtill forming one great family, ſpeaking the ſame language, and journeying ſtill towards the weſt, fixed themſelves in the land of Shinar, or Chaldea; and arrogantly reſolved to "build themſelves a city, and a town "whoſe top might reach unto heaven; "and to make themſelves a name, leſt they "ſhould be ſcattered abroad upon the face "of the earth." Baffled in their proud deſign by the diverſity of languages, which the Supreme Being ſuddenly introduced among them, as the inſtrument both of bringing to confuſion their preſent enterpriſe, and of facilitating their diſperſion into different regions where they were to become the founders of many nations; they ſeparated in ſmall bodies from each other, accordingly as Providence impelled them, whether by ſpecial command, or by the familiar courſe of events, through which the Deity influences the proceedings of men, no leſs powerfully and no leſs efficaciouſly, for the furtherance of his own purpoſes, than by interpoſitions evidently miraculous. By the poſterity of Japheth,

" the isles of the Gentiles" (many of the maritime countries washed by the Mediterranean sea) " were divided in their lands; " every one after his tongue, after their " families, in their nations (z)." The descendants of Ham occupied, among other lands, Assyria, Egypt, Palestine, Chaldea, and part of Arabia. Among the possessions of the posterity of Shem, we find Persia, and other regions of the east.

By this time a striking change had been experienced in the duration of human life. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years. His posterity before the flood appear to have passed, upon an average, nearly as large a portion of time, and some individuals even a longer period, upon earth (a). Noah lived to the age of nine hundred and fifty years (b). His son Shem fell far short of antediluvian longevity: and in the days of Peleg, man (c) appears not to have attained to one half of the original measure of

(z) Gen. x. 5.
(b) Gen. ix. 29.
(a) See Gen. v.
(c) See Gen. xi.

his

his exiſtence. In ſucceeding generations a rapid diminution continued to take place: until at length by the time when the children of Iſrael came out of Egypt, and perhaps a century before their departure, the length of the pilgrimage of man upon earth was reduced nearly or altogether within the preſent ſpan.

Was this event then the natural reſult of alterations occaſioned by the deluge in the temperature of the air, the fertility of the earth, and the nutritive powers of the ſuſtenance of man? Or was it effected by a ſecret change wrought in the human frame and conſtitution by the immediate hand of the Creator? The cauſe is known to God; but immaterial to us. Our concern is to draw from the fact the moral and religious inſtruction, which it is ſo well adapted to ſuggeſt; that our lives are in the hands of God, and depend for their continuance, moment after moment, ſolely on his will. We may alſo diſcern reaſons for concluding that the ſhortening of the

period of human life was intended to be a bleſſing to mankind; and that, notwithſtanding the frailty and corruption of man, it has proved and continues to prove ſo. Among the circumſtances which contributed to ſwell the wickedneſs of the ancient world to its enormous magnitude, there were few probably more powerful than the apparent diſtance to which death was removed. In the preſent day, when he who has numbered ſeventy or eighty ſucceſſive units, has numbered the years within which he and almoſt all his cotemporaries of the human race will be called to ſtand before the tribunal of their judge; to what an exceſs of iniquity do multitudes advance! What then would be the meaſure of their guilt, if they might with reaſonable expectation look to many additional centuries of life? At preſent too, the reign of the oppreſſor, whether in a private or in a public ſtation, is neceſſarily ſhort. The hour that ſhall ſweep him away is at hand. Were life reſtored to its antediluvian period, he might continue for nearly a thouſand

years

years to render his fellow creatures miſerable. "I have ſeen the wicked," ſaith the Pſalmiſt, "in great power, and ſpreading himſelf like a green bay-tree. Yet "he paſſed away, and lo, he was not: "yea I ſought him, but he could not be "found (*d*)." The common courſe of nature ſpeedily puts an end to his career; and his place may be filled by the righteous. To the righteous themſelves, more eſpecially if they are burthened with afflictions, the ſhortneſs of life is a gracious diſpenſation. They enter the ſooner into the manſions of the "bleſſed which die in "the Lord: that they may reſt from their "labours; and their works do follow "them (*e*)."

(*d*) Pſalm xxxvii. 35, 36. (*e*) Rev. xiv. 13.

CHAP. II.

SUMMARY VIEW OF THE ORIGIN OF THE JEWISH RACE, AND OF THE HISTORY OF THAT PEOPLE TO THE DEATH OF MOSES.

THE fallen nature of man, that inherent ſource of corrupt diſpoſitions and corrupt practice, remained unaltered by the flood. There does not indeed appear to have been any circumſtance in that diſpenſation, awful and ſtupendous as it was, which could reach the internal conſtitution of the ſoul. The truth of this concluſion is aſcertained by the unequivocal declaration of God himſelf; who, when ſpeaking immediately after the deluge concerning the future race of mankind which was to ſpring from the family that deſcended from the ark, and even when promiſing to that future race his continual protection and bounty, characteriſes them collectively in terms ſimilar

to

to thoſe which he had applied to their wicked anceſtors whom he had recently deſtroyed: "the imagination of man's "heart is evil from his youth (*a*)." The uniform tenor of the holy Scriptures, and the univerſal teſtimony of experience, concur in evincing the undiminiſhed power of the original depravity.

The ſacred hiſtorian, haſtening to record events ſo intereſting to his own people and to all mankind, as the vocation of Abraham and the Divine promiſes confirmed to the ſucceeding Patriachs, paſſes rapidly over the period intervening between the deluge and the call of the father of the Jewiſh race. The ſlight notices, however, which he gives of the conduct of men are ſuch as ſeem to indicate the general prevalence of preſumptuous guilt. Their attempt to build the tower of Babel was evidently in direct oppoſition to an humble dependence upon God. And the terms, in which the Supreme Being manifeſts his indigna-

(*a*) Gen. viii. 21.

tion

tion on that occaſion, ſtrongly ſuggeſt the idea, that men were arrived at a very advanced ſtage of general and daring wickedneſs: "This they begin to do: and now "nothing will be reſtrained from them, "which they have imagined to do(*b*)." In the fulneſs therefore of wiſdom and mercy, the Supreme Being, in order to preſerve true religion alive among mankind, and to prepare the way for the coming of the promiſed Redeemer, had determined to ſelect to himſelf from among the families of the earth a peculiar people; to place them in a country which ſhould belong to them from generation to generation; to reveal to them a clear knowledge of his attributes and perfections; to deliver to them a ſyſtem of laws and ſacred rites adapted to anſwer the purpoſes both of rendering thoſe who ſhould receive them religious, and of ſhadowing out the future ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt and the bleſſings thereby to be purchaſed; and to reward the obedience of this choſen race with temporal mercies ſo

(*b*) Gen. xi. 6.

ſignal, and to chaſtiſe their diſobedience by temporal calamities ſo ſevere, as might be ſuited to preſerve this people faithful to their Divine Benefactor, to reclaim them when they ſhould revolt from him, and to convince the inhabitants of ſurrounding countries that He was the only God.

Accordingly the Supreme Being, nearly two thouſand years before the Chriſtian era, appeared to Abram, the ſon of Terah, an inhabitant of Ur in Meſopotamia, and ſaid to him: "Get thee out of thy country, "and from thy kindred, and from thy "father's houſe, unto a land that I will "ſhew thee. And I will make of thee a "great nation: and I will bleſs thee, and "make thy name great; and thou ſhalt be "a bleſſing: and I will bleſs them that "bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth "thee." To theſe glorious promiſes, which were to be the conſequences of Abram's obedience, the Deity added another infinitely more glorious; that from him ſhould deſcend the Redeemer of mankind:

"and

" and in thee ſhall all families of the earth " be bleſſed (*c*)." Abram, at the time when this divine communication was made to him, was very probably an idolater. The country of the Chaldees, which he inhabited, appears to have been diſtinguiſhed from the earlieſt annals of Pagan antiquity for magic and ſuperſtition. And Joſhua (*d*) ſeems nearly to remove the poſſibility of doubt on the point under conſideration by the following addreſs to the Iſraelites, which proves the idolatry of Abram's family: " Thus ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael: " Your fathers dwelt on the other ſide of " the flood," (the river Euphrates, ſo denominated from its extraordinary magnitude,) " in old time, even Terah the father of " Abraham, and the father of Nachor, " and they ſerved other gods." Abram, however, convinced of the reality of the Divine command, and of the truth of the Divine promiſes, immediately prepared to depart. After the death of his father Terah, who accompanied him on his jour-

(*c*) Gen. xii. 1—3. (*d*) Joſhua, xxiv. 2.

ney towards the promiſed country, but died by the way at Haran, Abram proceeded, with his nephew Lot, and their families, into the land of Canaan: and on his arrival there, God appeared to him again; and ſaid, "Unto thy ſeed will I give this "land (*e*)." Abram had at this time no child: and the expectation of an offspring was for a very long period a continual and deciſive trial of his faith. Some years after the time when the promiſe was originally given, it was twice renewed to him in terms which foretold an innumerable multitude of deſcendents: and "Abram "believed in the Lord; and He counted "it to him for righteouſneſs (*f*)." At length about eleven years after his arrival in Canaan he was rejoiced by the birth of his ſon Iſhmael. Four years afterwards Abram was informed that the ſon indicated by the Divine promiſe was yet to be born to him: and at the ſame time his own name was changed to Abraham, and that of his wife to Sarah; an alteration which, accord-

(*e*) Gen. xii. 7. (*f*) Gen. xiii. 14, &c. and xv. 4—6.

ing

ing to Hebrew etymology, alluded to the incalculable number of their poſterity. But it was not until about fourteen years after the birth of Iſhmael, when the age of Abraham and Sarah precluded, according to the common courſe of nature, all proſpect of a child being born to them, that they were bleſſed with Iſaac, the long-expected ſon, who was to inherit the promiſes made to his father, particularly that of being the anceſtor of the Meſſiah.

The Almighty in the mean time imparted to Abraham ſeveral prophetic intimations of the future fortunes of his deſcendents. He had informed him that one branch of his poſterity ſhould dwell as ſtrangers in a land that was not theirs, (namely, in the land of Canaan, while it was as yet in other hands, and afterwards in Egypt,) during a period of four hundred years; but ſhould then be brought forth in great triumph and proſperity from the ſcene of their diſtreſs (*g*). And concerning Iſhmael God declared that,

(*g*) Gen. xv. 13, 14.

though he ſhould be a wild man, his hand againſt every man, and every man's hand againſt him; he ſhould be the father of twelve princes and of a great nation, and ſhould dwell in the preſence of all his brethren (*b*). In this caſe, as in the caſe already noticed of Canaan, and conformably to the general import of ſcriptural prophecies in ſimilar inſtances; the prediction delivered reſpecting the individual was deſigned to be deſcriptive of the characteriſtic events, which were to diſtinguiſh the fate of his poſterity. Succeeding generations were witneſſes, as we ourſelves are in this our day, of the accurate fulfilment of this prophecy in the lot of the Arabians, the deſcendents of Iſhmael. The twelve tribes of the Arabians are ſpecified in Pagan hiſtory. Dwelling, like their progenitor, in the deſerts; wild men, their hand againſt every man, and every man's hand againſt them; engaged in perpetual hoſtility with each

(*b*) Gen. xvi. 12.— xvii. 20.—and xxv. 16. See Biſhop Newton's Diſſertation on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 37–63. 3d edition, 8vo.

other,

other, and with every neighbouring power: they have ſteadily maintained their national independence. In vain have the moſt formidable armies of the greateſt empires endeavoured to overturn it. They have retired baffled and diſmayed; or have periſhed by the ſword and famine in the wilderneſs. The Egyptians, the Aſſyrians, the Perſians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Turks, have ſucceſſively confirmed by their fruitleſs efforts the veracity and omnipotence of God. After ſuſtaining the moſt active enmity of the moſt powerful nations for three thouſand ſeven hundred years, the Arabians ſtill live, unſubdued and fearleſs, in the preſence of all their brethren.

About the time of the birth of Iſaac, the merciful acceptance given to the interceſſion of Abraham for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah afforded a memorable proof of the condeſcending goodneſs of the Supreme Being; and was graciouſly adapted to encourage the faithful ſervants of God to earneſtneſs of ſupplication in behalf of

themſelves and others, by teaching the conſoling truth which we learn alſo from the Apoſtle; that "the fervent prayer of a "righteous man availeth much (*i*)." The preſervation of Lot from the general deſtruction evinced that the hand of Providence diſcriminates between the upright and the wicked.

In proceſs of time it pleaſed God to "tempt" Abraham; that is to ſay, to try him, to put his obedience to a further teſt. The trial appointed was moſt ſevere. The father was commanded to take his ſon, his only ſon Iſaac, (his only ſon by Sarah, and the child of the promiſe,) whom he loved, and to offer him as a burnt-ſacrifice in the land of Moriah upon a mountain, which was to be pointed out to him. Abraham, ſtrong in faith, immediately proceeded on the journey. He knew that whatever God commanded it was his duty to perform. He knew by long experience the power and the truth of the Almighty. He knew that the promiſe which he had received of

(*i*) James, v. 16.

an innumerable poſterity, and one of them the Saviour of the world, by that very ſon Iſaac who was now to be ſlain on the altar, would aſſuredly be accompliſhed. He confided that God, in return for this demonſtration of unreſerved obedience and entire dependence, would ſpeedily reſtore his ſon to life (*k*). The willing mind was ſufficient in the ſight of God. The fatal injunction, at the very moment when it was about to be executed, was countermanded by the voice of an angel. The full approbation of God was announced to Abraham; and every former promiſe made to him and to Iſaac ſolemnly reiterated and confirmed. It is evident that the ſacrifice of Iſaac was a type of the future ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt. And the mountain on which the tranſaction took place is by many conceived, and on no improbable grounds, to have been the identical mountain on which Chriſt ſuffered upon the croſs.

Jacob, the younger ſon of Iſaac, was afterwards pronounced by the Supreme

(*k*) Heb. xi. 17—19.

Being

Being to be the perſon in whoſe line the great promiſes made to his grandfather and father were to be continued. And his mother Rebecca, inſtead of implicitly depending on God for the fulfilment of his own word, had recourſe to a very unwarrantable ſtep in order to ſecure to him the patriarchal bleſſing accompanying the right to thoſe promiſes; a bleſſing which ſhe apprehended that the partiality of Iſaac, now far advanced in years, would aſſign to his firſt-born Eſau in contradiction to the purpoſe of Heaven. Jacob, flying from the reſentment of his brother Eſau, who deemed himſelf defrauded of his right; a right, however, which while he had imagined it to be in his power he had profanely ſlighted (*l*); received from God a full aſſurance of protection, and of the fulfilment of the original promiſe, in himſelf and his poſterity (*m*). And, after many years, when he returned into the land of Canaan with his wives and children and great poſſeſſions, the promiſe was again

(*l*) See Gen. xxv. 34. and Heb. xii. 16.
(*m*) Gen. xxviii. 13—15.

repeated:

repeated: and as a ſignal mark of Divine favour, his name was changed to Iſrael; a term denoting a perſon who had power with God (*n*). He returned in time to pay the laſt offices of duty to his father Iſaac; and experienced the kindeſt reception from his reconciled brother Eſau.

After dwelling ſomewhat more than thirty years, yet ſtill as a ſtranger, in the countries occupied by the Canaanites, Jacob removed with all his family into Egypt. For this event God had prepared the way by the ſale of Joſeph as a ſlave into that kingdom; by having beſtowed on that young man, as a reward for his ſignal virtue, the power of interpreting the prophetic dreams of his fellow-priſoners the ſervants of Pharaoh, and afterwards the viſions of Pharaoh himſelf; by having raiſed him to be the ſecond perſon in the kingdom, poſſeſſed in fact of the full exerciſe of ſovereign authority; and by having thus enabled him to provide for

(*n*) Gen. xxxv. 10, &c.

his father and his repentant brethren an aſylum during the continuance of the general famine. When Jacob was now commencing his journey, he was encouraged with this aſſurance from the Almighty: "I am God, the God of thy father. Fear "not to go down into Egypt; for I will "there make of thee a great nation. I "will go down with thee into Egypt; and "I will alſo ſurely bring thee" (thy poſterity, at the end of the time predicted to Abraham) (*o*) "up again: and Joſeph ſhall "put his hand upon thine eyes (*p*)." At the end of ſeventeen years Jacob died in Egypt; and was carried into the land of Canaan, according to the ſolemn charge which he had given to Joſeph, and buried in the ſepulchre of his fathers. Foretelling on his death-bed the appointed fortunes of his poſterity, he beſtowed on Judah a decided pre-eminence over his other ſons: and intimated that he ſhould be the immediate anceſtor of the promiſed Meſſiah; and that until the Saviour ſhould appear,

(*o*) Gen. xv. 13, 14. (*p*) Gen. xlvi. 3, 4.

the deſcendents of Judah ſhould remain in poſſeſſion of a national habitation and an eſtabliſhed form of government (*q*). Joſeph in his turn confirmed to his brethren, at the time of his death, the certainty of their future departure to the promiſed land: and enjoined them to carry his bones thither with them (*r*).

Other kings who had not known Joſeph now aroſe ſucceſſively in Egypt. Alarmed at the vaſt and ſtill increaſing number of the Iſraelites, they haraſſed the unhappy ſtrangers with the ſevereſt bondage; condemning them to be inceſſantly employed in the conſtruction of cities and public works; and ultimately commanding that every man-child that ſhould be born unto the Hebrews ſhould be caſt into the Nile. Moſes, the choſen inſtrument for the deliverance of this people, was miraculouſly preſerved from deſtruction, and educated in the court of Pharaoh. When arrived at the age of forty years, he ſlew an Egyptian

(*q*) Gen. xlix. 8—10. (*r*) Gen. l. 25.

who

who was ſmiting an Hebrew. He truſted that from this tranſaction the children of Iſrael, " his brethren, would have under-" ſtood that God by his hand would " deliver them. But they underſtood " not (*s*)." Compelled therefore to ſave his life by flight from the reſentment of Pharaoh, he retired into the land of Midian. There, after about forty additional years, while feeding the flocks of his father-in-law on Mount Horeb, in the wilderneſs incloſed between the two northern points of the Red Sea, his attention was attracted by the appearance of a conflagration raging in a thicket, by which however the thicket was not conſumed. God, who thus manifeſted himſelf to Moſes, commanded him to return into Egypt; that in conjunction with his brother Aaron he might bring forth the children of Iſrael from captivity, and conduct them into the land of Canaan to poſſeſs it. After ſome degree of improper heſitation ariſing from timidity, Moſes obeyed; and thenceforth executed with

(*s*) Acts, vii. 23—25.

undaunted

undaunted reſolution, reſulting from ſteady confidence in the promiſed aſſiſtance of the Almighty, the commiſſion with which he was charged. His countrymen, convinced by the miracles which God enabled him to work, received him as their leader and deliverer. Tamed by ten ſucceſſive judgements cloſed by the death of all the firſt-born in Egypt, the hardened heart of Pharaoh ſunk within him. The children of Iſrael, loaded by the Egyptians, who trembled at their preſence, with the moſt valuable gifts, deſigned to procure their forgiveneſs for the cruel oppreſſion which they had ſuſtained, departed in triumph from the land of bondage. But Pharaoh ſpeedily relapſed into obduracy. Enraged at the loſs of ſix hundred thouſand ſlaves, for to ſo great a multitude were the men of Iſrael, excluſive of women and children, increaſed, the king of Egypt followed them at the head of his armies; and continued the purſuit into the midſt of the Red Sea, which God had divided that it might afford a paſſage on dry ground for his people.

The

The waves at the Divine word returned to their place; and not a ſingle Egyptian ſurvived.

The departure of the children of Iſrael from Egypt, after a reſidence there of two hundred and fifteen years, took place about fifteen hundred and fifty one years before the Chriſtian Era. It was ſignalized by the inſtitution of the paſſover; a religious rite appointed to commemorate the mercy of God in charging the deſtroying angel to paſs over the houſes of the Iſraelites, when he ſmote all the firſt-born of the Egyptians; and ordered to be annually obſerved from generation to generation until the coming of Jeſus Chriſt to put an end to the Moſaic diſpenſation, and to make that effectual atonement for ſin, of which the Paſchal offering was an emblem (*t*).

The ſhorteſt road from Egypt to the land of Canaan lay along the coaſt of the Mediterranean through the country of the

(*t*) 1 Cor. v. 7.

Philiſtines.

Philiſtines. The Iſraelites, however, with minds depreſſed by ſlavery and unaccuſtomed to repoſe full confidence on their God, would have preferred a return into their former bondage to a conteſt with warlike nations hoſtile to their paſſage. For this reaſon therefore, among others (*u*), the Supreme Being had conducted them circuitouſly by the way of the Red Sea. He now directed their courſe through the wilderneſs towards Mount Sinai, one part of the chain of Mount Horeb; the place concerning which he had ſaid on his firſt appearance to Moſes, "when thou haſt brought forth "the people out of Egypt, ye ſhall ſerve "God upon this mountain (*v*)." On their way thither, by their ſucceſſive murmurings, at Marah, in the wilderneſs of ſin, and at Rephidim, notwithſtanding the reiterated miracles by which they were protected and ſuſtained; they gave early proofs of meriting the denomination ſo frequently applied to them in the Scriptures, that of a "ſtiff-necked" people; a people

(*u*) Exod. xiii. 17, 18. (*v*) Exod. iii. 12.

ſtubborn in unbelief, and obſtinately rebellious. One of theſe miracles was nothing leſs than the daily ſupply of a ſubſtance, termed Manna, in quantities ſufficient for the ſuſtenance of the whole multitude; and ultimately continued to them without interruption during forty years. In the third month after their departure from Egypt they encamped before Mount Sinai.

It was here that the Almighty, graciouſly accommodating his conduct to the apprehenſions and uſages of men, propoſed the eſtabliſhment of a ſolemn covenant between himſelf and the people of Iſrael. "Moſes "went up unto God; and the Lord called "unto him out of the mountain, ſaying, "Thus ſhalt thou ſay to the Houſe of "Jacob, and tell the children of Iſrael: "Ye have ſeen what I did to the Egyptians; "and how I bare you on eagles' wings, "and brought you unto myſelf. Now "then, if ye will obey my voice indeed, "and keep my covenant, then ye ſhall be "a peculiar treaſure unto me above all "people:

"people: for all the earth is mine: and "ye ſhall be a kingdom of prieſts unto "me, and an holy nation. Theſe are the "words which thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the "children of Iſrael. And Moſes came "and called for the elders of the people, "and laid before their faces all theſe words, "which the Lord commanded him. And "all the people anſwered together, and "ſaid; All that the Lord hath ſpoken we "will do. And Moſes returned the words "of the people unto the Lord (*w*)." In conſequence of this unequivocal acceptance and ratification of the covenant propoſed, the Supreme Being proceeded to deliver to the Iſraelites thoſe laws and inſtitutions, the faithful obſervance of which was the condition on their part that ſhould entitle them to the privileges and bleſſings reciprocally promiſed by their God. That the obedience already due for unnumbered mercies might be confirmed by a diſplay of the terrors of his majeſty, he revealed his glory in the moſt awful manner on Mount

(*w*) Exod. xix. 3—8.

Sinai. "There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the "Mount; and the voice of the trumpet "exceeding loud: ſo that all the people "that was in the camp trembled. And "Mount Sinai was altogether in a ſmoke, "becauſe the Lord deſcended upon it in "fire: and the ſmoke thereof aſcended as "the ſmoke of a furnace; and the whole "Mount quaked greatly. And when the "voice of the trumpet ſounded long, and "waxed louder and louder, Moſes ſpake; "and God anſwered him by a voice (*x*)." When the voice of God had proclaimed the ten commandments, the people, unable to ſupport the tremendous manifeſtations of the Divine Preſence, earneſtly intreated (*y*) that they might no more hear the voice of God; but that his will might be communicated to Moſes, and by Moſes be declared to them. The Supreme Being liſtened to their requeſt. The people retired afar off. "Moſes drew near unto

(*x*) Exod. xix. 16—19. (*y*) Exod. xx. 19. See alſo Deut. v. 22, &c.

"the

"the thick darkneſs, where God was;" and received many additional laws and regulations, which he recited to the Iſraelites, and then recorded in a book: and the people ſolemnly renewed their promiſe of punctual obedience (z). Moſes then, according to the Divine command, reaſcended the mountain, leaving the Iſraelites under the conduct of Aaron and Hur, and continued there forty days: during which period he was inſtructed in the ritual of the ſervice of the tabernacle, and the appointment of the family of Aaron to the prieſthood; and received two tables of ſtone containing the ten commandments, written by the finger of God. In the mean time, the people, weary of his abſence, and preſumptuouſly regardleſs of their covenanted obedience to the Almighty, who had expreſsly prohibited them from worſhipping or making any image as an emblem of himſelf, induced Aaron, who moſt criminally permitted himſelf to be overborne by their importunities, to form a

(z) Exod. xxiv. 3. 7.

golden calf; a form probably adopted in conſequence of their having been accuſtomed to ſee it adored in Egypt; that it might be carried at the head of the hoſt as a viſible repreſentation of Jehovah. On the earneſt interceſſion of Moſes God forbore to deſtroy the people. Their guilt, however, was puniſhed by the loſs of the two tables, broken by Moſes in his indignation on firſt being informed of the idolatry eſtabliſhed in the camp; by the ſtill more grievous loſs of the immediate preſence of God, who ordered his tabernacle to be removed out of the encampment, and declared that an angel inſtead of himſelf ſhould now be their conductor; by the menace of future viſitations on account of this tranſgreſſion; and by the actual penal inflictions implied in the words of Scripture, "The Lord *plagued* the people, becauſe "they made the calf (*a*)." Two freſh tables of ſtone, in the place of thoſe which had been broken, were then prepared by Moſes, and taken up unto the Mount,

(*a*) Exod. xxxii. 34, 35.

according to the commandment of God, who wrote upon them the words which had been inſcribed on the former; and afterwards delivered to Moſes, during this his ſecond continuance there of forty days, additional ordinances and directions to be obeyed by the twelve tribes. The remainder of the Jewiſh code was from time to time imparted to Moſes, chiefly from the tabernacle, and by him made known to the people: and the tribe of Levi was ſet apart for the ſervice of the ſanctuary.

In the ſecond month of the ſecond year of their departure from Egypt, the Iſraelites were commanded to reſume their march towards the promiſed land; and in the fourth month of the ſame year they arrived on its confines. Even the few intervening weeks did not paſs without exhibiting two ſcenes of rebellious murmuring againſt God (*b*), together with a ſedition, in which Aaron himſelf was a party, directed againſt Moſes. Theſe outrages were but the pre-

(*b*) At Taberah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah. Numb. xi.

ludes to more flagrant acts of incredulity and diſobedience. Twelve leading men, ſelected one from a tribe, were diſpatched by Moſes, conformably to the deſire of the people, to examine into the ſtate and productions of the land of Canaan. All of them, on their return from exploring the land during forty days, concurred in extolling its fertility. But ten of them gave ſo formidable an account of the perſonal ſtrength and military power of the inhabitants, that, notwithſtanding the utmoſt efforts of their aſſociates Caleb and Joſhua, who ſtrenuouſly exhorted the Iſraelites to go up inſtantly, truſting in the might and the promiſe of the Lord of Hoſts, the people abſolutely refuſed to venture into the country. They even prepared to ſtone to death Caleb and Joſhua, and, as it ſeems, Moſes and Aaron alſo. At the fervent ſupplication of Moſes, the deſtruction with which the Almighty threatened inſtantly to overwhelm his rebellious people was delayed. But God ſolemnly declared, that not one of the whole congregation who had

had arrived at the age of twenty years, his faithful ſervants Caleb and Joſhua excepted, ſhould ever ſet their foot on the promiſed land. All the reſt were gradually to periſh during the forty years, to be numbered from the time of their leaving Egypt, which he now doomed them to paſs in wanderings in the deſert. The ſacred hiſtorian, though he gives a catalogue of the ſubſequent journies and places of encampment of the Iſraelites during this period; has recorded little concerning the further tranſactions, which took place antecedently to the concluding year. In the brief account, however, which he has delivered, we meet with one of the cuſtomary rebellions of the people, commenced by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who with their families were ſwallowed up by the earth, which opened beneath them; and drawing after it the deſtruction of near fifteen thouſand of the congregation by fire from Heaven, or by a peſtilence (*c*). In the beginning of the fortieth year, when they were encamped near Kadeſh on the confines of Edom, they

(*c*) Numb. xvi.

again rebelled for want of water; and by their violence enſnared Moſes and Aaron into a degree of preſumption and diſtruſt, which drew from the Almighty this awful ſentence: "Becauſe ye believed me not, to "ſanctify me in the eyes of the children "of Iſrael; therefore ye ſhall not bring "this congregation into the land which I "have given them (*d*)." About four months afterwards Aaron was accordingly commanded to aſcend Mount Hor, with his ſon Eleazar and Moſes, in the ſight of all the congregation; where Moſes took off the prieſtly garments from Aaron, and put them on his ſon: and Aaron died before God on the top of the mountain (*e*). At the cloſe of the fortieth year, yet not until they had again broken forth into rebellion, and had been puniſhed by fiery ſerpents (*f*);

(*d*) Numb. xx. 12. (*e*) Numb. xx. 23, &c. xxxiii. 38.

(*f*) Numb. xxi. 4—9. From the bite of theſe ſerpents they were not to be cured except by looking on a brazen ſerpent, which God commanded Moſes to make, and to raiſe on a pole in the camp. Our Saviour alludes to this tranſaction, John, iii. 14. as emblematical of that faith in him, by which alone mankind can be delivered from the deadly conſequences of guilt.

they

they encamped, after completely ſubduing the Amorites who oppoſed their march, in the plains of Moab, near the river Jordan, oppoſite to Jericho. The terror of their name, and the multitude of their hoſt, filled Balak, the king of Moab, with conſternation. He inſtantly diſpatched meſſengers to Balaam, a celebrated prophet of Pethor in Meſopotamia, inviting him to come and pronounce ſolemn maledictions againſt the Iſraelites, as an infallible method of enſuring their defeat. Balaam, obeying the directions which he received from God, refuſed to return with them. A more numerous and more honourable ſet of ambaſſadors arrived from the king of Moab. Balaam, "who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs (*g*)," inflamed with the deſire of poſſeſſing the riches and honours promiſed on his compliance with the royal requeſt, again laid the matter before God; although he had before received an anſwer which precluded all further application: "Thou ſhalt not go with them: thou ſhalt

(*g*) 2 Peter, ii. 15.

"not

"not curſe the people; for they are bleſſ-
"ed (*b*)." The Supreme Being, to whom the covetouſneſs of Balaam's heart was manifeſt, gave him permiſſion to accompany the princes of Moab, on condition of his ſpeaking concerning Iſrael that only which God ſhould put into his mouth: yet ſhewed him on the journey by ſeveral miraculous intimations that his avaricious deſire to undertake it was highly offenſive in the eyes of his Maker. Three ſucceſſive times did Balaam diſappoint Balak by pronouncing bleſſings inſtead of curſes on the children of Iſrael. But the corrupt mind of the ſoothſayer deviſed another method of gratifying his employer. He inſtructed Balak to endeavour to enſnare the Iſraelites into idolatry and its attendant vices; and thus to withdraw them from the Divine protection (*i*). The ſcheme was attended with conſiderable ſucceſs. Iſrael worſhipped the Gods of Moab: the anger of the Lord was kindled; and twenty-four thouſand of the congregation were immediately deſtroyed

(*b*) Numb. xxii. 12. (*i*) Numb. xxxi. 16.

by

by a peſtilence. The zeal of Phinehas for the honour of Jehovah was rewarded with the promiſe of a perpetual prieſthood to himſelf and his poſterity. The Iſraelites were commanded to make war on the nation, which had ſeduced them into tranſgreſſion. The Midianites were utterly deſtroyed by the ſword of Iſrael: and Balaam periſhed with them.

But why, it may be ſaid, did the all-knowing Searcher of hearts vouchſafe to hold converſe with ſo worthleſs a character? Whence comes it that inſpiration, and prophetic knowledge, and other eſpecial favours of Heaven, beſtowed on ſo few individuals of the whole human race, are not uniformly conferred upon the righteous? On the righteous they have been beſtowed almoſt excluſively: yet to this rule there have unqueſtionably been exceptions. Balaam was an exception: Judas Iſcariot was an exception: and perhaps one or two more may be diſcovered in the Scriptures. We may be ſatisfied, that He who can beſtow

beſtow on his creatures the gifts of inſpiration and prophecy, and miraculous powers, will not in any inſtance diſtribute them without ſufficient reaſons, whether his reaſons be perceptible to us or not. Can we then diſcover no one advantage likely to reſult from the occaſional ſelection of an unworthy object for the reception of theſe peculiar favours? One benefit ſeems obviouſly to preſent itſelf to our conſideration. We learn the momentous leſſon, that it is neither inſpiration, nor prophetic knowledge, nor the power of working miracles, which can lead to ſalvation; but a life exerciſed in the fear and the love of God. It is to be obſerved, that the Divine juſtice has uſually diſplayed itſelf in the ſignal puniſhment, in this world, of the guilty wretch, whom not even the poſſeſſion of the peculiar favours of God had ſubdued unto holineſs. Balaam died by the hand of thoſe whom he had beguiled into idolatry: Judas Iſcariot by his own.

During

During the two concluding months of the fortieth year, Moſes, knowing that his death was at hand, delivered to the then exiſting generation of the Iſraelites, moſt of whom either were not born when the law was originally given, or were too young to enter fully into its meaning, a recapitulation (*k*) of the Divine commands, with ſuch ſlight additions or variations as he had been inſtructed to make. That he might inſpire them with the deepeſt conviction of their own unworthineſs, and of the long-ſuffering and kindneſs of their heavenly Benefactor; he recalled to their remembrance all the wonderful works which God had wrought in their behalf, and their own frequent acts of obſtinate incredulity and rebellion. And to perſuade them by every motive to continue ſtedfaſt for the future in obedient ſervice to that Power, who, notwithſtanding ſo many provocations, was about to give them poſſeſſion of the land of

(*k*) That recapitulation, and the other ſubjects mentioned in this paragraph, form the contents of the book of Deuteronomy.

Canaan;

Canaan; he laid before them in detail a moſt encouraging catalogue of the bleſſings which would accompany them as long as they ſhould remain faithful to Jehovah; and prophetically denounced, in terms equally circumſtantial, the miſeries with which Divine juſtice would purſue the diſobedience of themſelves and their poſterity. Having performed this concluding office of duty and affection to his countrymen; and having appointed, as the Lord directed him, Joſhua to be their leader in his place; having committed the Book of the Law, which he had written, to the care of the Levites, that it might be preſerved by the ſide of the Ark; he aſcended to the top of Mount Nebo: and having from that ſtation ſurveyed the promiſed land, which he was not to enter, died before the Lord. His body was buried by the Lord in a valley in the country of the Moabites, in a ſpot not diſcloſed to the children of Iſrael; leſt, as it ſhould ſeem, their reverence for the memory of their departed lawgiver, concurring with their inherent proneneſs to idolatry,

atry, ſhould afterwards lead them to pay religious honours to his remains.

Such was, as to this world and its labours, the end of Moſes, the ſervant of God. In every inſtance, except in that which was puniſhed, for an awful proof of the impartial dealings of the Supreme Being with men, by his being forbidden to enter the land of promiſe; he appears to have diſcharged with unabated zeal the commiſſion with which he was entruſted. The law which through his inſtrumentality was communicated to the Iſraelites, conſiſted partly of inſtructions and precepts in themſelves of a moral and religious nature; partly of ceremonial ordinances, and directions, reſpecting points originally indifferent. The former branch contained a clear revelation of the eternity, the power, the wiſdom, the goodneſs, and the other infinite perfections, of the only God, the Maker, the Preſerver, the Governor, and the Judge of the univerſe. In the ten commandments, the ſum of moral duty may truly be ſaid to be

comprehended; ſince the prohibition of the chief crime in each claſs of offences evidently includes, by parity of reaſoning, the prohibition of all inferior crimes of that claſs, as partaking of the ſinful nature, and tending ultimately to produce the guilt, of the greateſt. The ſubordinate duties thus implied in the commandments were afterwards in a great variety of caſes detailed and exemplified at large in other parts of the books of Moſes. This branch of the law is manifeſtly of univerſal and perpetual obligation; and is repeatedly mentioned as ſuch by our Saviour. The other branch was deſigned to be obligatory on the Jews only; and on them no longer than until the coming of the Meſſiah, whoſe ſufferings and atonement many of its rites and ceremonies prefigured. If in this part of the law we ſhould meet with ſome directions, the object and utility of which ſhould not at firſt ſight be apparent to us; let us beware of ſetting up the concluſions of our ignorance againſt the unbounded wiſdom of the Deity. A cloſer conſideration of

the

the ſubject will teach us humbly to acknowledge, that all theſe inſtitutions anſwered the purpoſes of exerciſing the Iſraelites in faith and obedience; of preſerving them a diſtinct and ſeparate people; and of training them by a peculiar mode of diſcipline (*l*), wiſely according with their habits, prepoſſeſſions and circumſtances, for the reception of the new diſpenſation to be revealed under the Meſſiah. It will teach us alſo that many of thoſe directions, which raſhneſs and preſumption are ſometimes heard to cenſure as trifling, and unworthy of the Divine attention, were ſpecifically calculated to guard the people of Iſrael from being betrayed into certain particular modes of idolatry and wickedneſs prevalent in the nations among whom they were to dwell.

(*l*) Gal. iii. 23—25.

CHAP. III.

SUMMARY VIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS FROM THE DEATH OF MOSES TO THE PRESENT TIME.

JOSHUA, having received from the Almighty a promiſe of unfailing ſupport (*a*), and a grant, in behalf of the Iſraelites, of the whole region extending from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and from the mountains of Lebanon on the north to the Wilderneſs of Sin on the ſouth (*b*); prepared to put the twelve tribes into poſſeſſion of their inheritance. The hand of God was ſtretched out to aid him. The waters of the river Jordan, at that time overflowing, like the Nile, with its annual inundation, were miraculouſly parted aſunder to afford a paſſage on dry ground to the hoſt. The

(*a*) Joſhua, i. 5.

(*b*) Joſh. i. 4. See alſo Numb. xxxiv. 3. — Deut. xi. 24.—and Gen. xv. 18.

walls

walls of Jericho fell to the earth. The ſun and the moon ſtood ſtill to afford Iſrael time for the complete overthrow of his enemies. The extirpation of the Canaanites was gradual; that the beaſts of the field might not have time to multiply and overſpread the land (*c*). But before the death of Joſhua, the country, though a conſiderable portion remained to be ſubdued, was divided by lot, according to the command of God, among the tribes; with the exception of that of Levi, and of thoſe which had already received at their own requeſt their inheritance in the conquered kingdoms of the Amorites, on the other ſide of the Jordan. The Levites were provided with cities for the reſidence of their families; and with an ample ſubſiſtence from the ſacrifices and tithes of other tribes, on whoſe behalf, as well as on their own, they were to miniſter at the altar.

The command, which God had given to Iſrael reſpecting the Canaanites, was, that they ſhould be exterminated. "Of

(*c*) Deut. vii. 22.

" the cities of theſe people, which the Lord " thy God doth give thee for thine inherit- " ance, thou ſhalt ſave nothing alive that " breatheth." The reaſon of this injunction is immediately ſubjoined: " thou ſhalt " utterly deſtroy them, as the Lord thy God " hath commanded thee; that they teach you " not to do after all their abominations (*d*)." Perſons, who ſeem to have conceived that to cavil at the Bible is a mark of diſcernment, have eagerly ſeized upon this paſſage; and have repreſented it as containing a ſanguinary edict unworthy of a merciful Governor of the univerſe; and as affording in fact a concluſive proof that the Bible is not the Word of God. Our faith however in the truth of Scripture is founded on too many irrefragable arguments to be ſtaggered by ſuch an objection as this, even if an anſwer in every point ſatisfactory could not be returned it. In every work of God around us there is much that we cannot perfectly underſtand. Why then ſhould we be ſurpriſed, if he ſhould permit that,

(*d*) Deut. xx. 16.

for

for the exerciſe of our underſtandings and the trial of our faith, ſome difficulties ſhould exiſt in his word alſo? But the difficulty in queſtion is of no formidable nature. The command is fully juſtified even to human apprehenſion by the reaſon which God himſelf aſſigned for it. We know that the Canaanites, in their groſs and bloody idol-worſhip, a worſhip celebrated with the ſacrifice of their own children, and in the univerſal and unbridled profligacy of their manners, had abandoned themſelves to ſuch ſhameleſs and deteſtable wickedneſs; that in the emphatical language of holy writ, the land itſelf abhorred and vomited out her inhabitants (*e*). We know the obſtinate propenſity of the Iſraelites to forſake their ſupreme Benefactor; and to pollute themſelves with idolatry and all its attendant abominations. We know too, that when they diſobeyed the injunction to extirpate all the nations which dwelt in Canaan, and contented themſelves with ſubjecting ſome of them to tribute; thoſe Canaanites, who

(*e*) Lev. xviii. 24, 25, &c. Deut. xii. 31.

were thus permitted to remain, proved thorns and ſnares to the people of Iſrael; grievous as enemies, corrupting as friends, and ultimately the cauſe of their ruin, according to the previous warnings delivered from God himſelf by the mouth of Moſes and of Joſhua (*f*). The deſtruction of the Canaanites therefore was fully deſerved by their crimes; and was requiſite to preſerve Iſrael from being enſnared by them or by their poſterity into the ſame crimes. The latter circumſtance explains the reaſon why even the young children of the people of Canaan were included in the ſentence of extirpation: and "juſtifies the ways of "God to man" in an inſtance which has been alleged as contrary to all ideas of the Divine rectitude by objectors, who ſeem to have forgotten that in earthquakes alſo, and in famines, and in peſtilences, the Deity ſees fit to let unoffending infancy be involved in the common deſolation (*g*); and that a future life affords ample ſcope for

(*f*) Numb. xxxiii. 55, 56. Joſh. xxiii. 13. Judg. ii. 3.

(*g*) See Biſhop Watſon's Apology for the Bible, 3d edition, p. 14, &c.

the

the complete diſcrimination between innocence and guilt. The employment of the Iſraelites as miniſters to execute the Divine vengeance was calculated to impreſs them with a deep conviction of the enormity of the ſins of their predeceſſors in the land: and with an awful recollection that the ſame puniſhment was already denounced againſt themſelves, if they ſhould fall into ſimilar tranſgreſſions.

Joſhua, now far advanced in years, aſſembled the twelve tribes of Iſrael to hear his laſt inſtructions. He recounted the wonders which God had wrought for them in Egypt, in the Wilderneſs, and in the land of Canaan, notwithſtanding their many provocations; pointed out the punctual accompliſhment of every one of the Divine promiſes: and having declared beforehand the ſtedfaſt determination of himſelf and his family to remain faithful ſervants of the Lord, received from the whole congregation a ſimilar aſſurance repeated in the moſt ſolemn terms. He then

diſmiſſed

diſmiſſed the people, every man to his inheritance, and ſhortly afterwards died.

During the life-time of the elders, who had been cotemporaries with Joſhua, the Iſraelites continued true to their engagement. The following generation gave themſelves up to idolatry. For the ſpace of about three hundred years from the death of Joſhua, their hiſtory exhibits a conſtant ſucceſſion of idolatrous revolts from God, puniſhed by captivity under the hand of the neighbouring nations; and of deliverances mercifully vouchſafed to them, when diſtreſs and anguiſh drove them to repentance. During this period they were governed, when free from a foreign yoke, by magiſtrates denominated judges; who were in general the perſons by whoſe hand the Supreme Being had reſcued them from the power of their oppreſſors. The judge was not regarded as the head of the nation, occupying a ſtation ſimilar to that filled by kings or other chief magiſtrates in modern times. That ſtation was conſidered as filled

by

by God himſelf. Thus when "the men "of Iſrael ſaid unto Gideon," (their judge,) "Rule thou over us; both thou, and thy "ſon, and thy ſon's ſon alſo; for thou haſt "delivered us from the hand of Midian: "Gideon ſaid unto them, I will not rule "over you, neither ſhall my ſon rule over "you. The Lord ſhall rule over you (*b*)." At length, in the latter days of Samuel, who had long been their judge; and ſomewhat leſs than eleven hundred years before the Chriſtian era; the people clamorouſly inſiſted on having, like other nations, a king to govern them. The Supreme Being teſtified his diſpleaſure at this act of rebellious ingratitude: "They have rejected "me, that I ſhould not reign over them (*i*):" but he commanded Samuel to anoint a king over them, conformably to their deſire. Samuel accordingly aſſembled the tribes. And having ſet before them their baſeneſs in renouncing the immediate ſovereignty of God; and having forewarned them, according to the directions which he had

(*b*) Judg. viii. 22, 23. (*i*) 1 Sam. viii. 7.

previouſly

previouſly received from the Almighty, of the chaſtiſement which they muſt expect from Divine juſtice through the inſtrumentality of kings reſembling their ſubjects in wickedneſs (*k*); he yielded to the determination in which they ſtill reſolutely perſiſted. Saul, the Son of Kiſh, of the tribe of Benjamin, was ſelected by the deſignation of Heaven to be king of Iſrael: and the continuance of the Divine protection and favour was promiſed to the ſovereign and the people on the condition of their fidelity to the worſhip and the laws of God.

The obedience of Saul was exerciſed by two ſpecific trials. In both of them he failed: breaking the poſitive commandment of God, in the firſt, through impatience and diſtruſt (*l*); in the ſecond, through fear of giving offence to the people (*m*). Samuel was in conſequence commanded to inform Saul, that the ſceptre ſhould not continue in his family; and to anoint David,

(*k*) 1 Sam. viii. 10—19. x. 19. xii. 12.
(*l*) 1 Sam. xiii. 8—13. (*m*) 1 Sam. xv. 1—24.

the ſon of Jeſſe, of the tribe of Judah, to be the ſucceſſor to the throne. David, ſignaliſed ſoon afterwards by his miraculous victory over Goliah; and held in the higheſt eſtimation by the people on account of the wiſdom of his conduct; preſerved his life with difficulty during many years from the perſecuting jealouſy of Saul. On the death of that monarch, after a reign of forty years, in battle againſt the Philiſtines, he went up to Hebron, as God directed him; and was there crowned king of the tribe of Judah. And after ſeven years of war with the houſe of Saul, he aſcended the throne of all Iſrael.

One of the earlieſt actions of his reign over the twelve tribes was to acquire complete poſſeſſion of the city of Jeruſalem, by forcibly diſlodging the Jebuſites, the old inhabitants of the land, from the fortreſs of Zion, which they had hitherto retained. This city he enlarged and beautified, and made it his capital; and finally brought thither the Ark of God. For its reception he pro-

propoſed to build a ſumptuous temple. The Supreme Being graciouſly accepted the piety of the intention; but forbade the king to execute the undertaking, in conſequence of his having neceſſarily ſhed much blood in the wars in which he had been engaged (*n*). This prohibition however was accompanied with many glorious promiſes to David and his family; and with an aſſurance that one of the ſons of David, who ſhould inherit the throne, and be "a man of reſt," ſhould erect the temple. For the magnificence of this future ſtructure David made the moſt ample preparations: and previouſly to his death ſolemnly charged his ſon and ſucceſſor, Solomon, to devote himſelf to the work; and to complete it, under the Divine protection, in a manner worthy of the ſacred purpoſe for which it was deſigned.

The character and conduct of David, with the exception of certain well-known inſtances of moſt flagrant criminality, which were followed by public and exemplary

(*n*) 2 Chron. xxii. 8.

puniſhment from God, and by the deepeſt anguiſh and repentance on the part of the offender, were diſtinguiſhed by holineſs and virtue. He was free, and preſerved his people free, from the ſlighteſt taint of idolatry. His confidence in his Maker was unſhaken. To his enemies he was placable, to his friends ſingularly affectionate. His Pſalms, whether they deſcribe the glory and majeſty of God; pour forth ſupplications for his favour; return the effuſions of gratitude for mercies received; breathe ſorrow and humiliation for ſins, general and particular; or prophetically deſcribe the future ſufferings of the Meſſiah, ordained to deſcend from the family of David; are models of ardent devotion, and will continue to the end of the world to exalt the piety and gladden the boſoms of thoſe, who labour to imitate the righteouſneſs of David "the man after God's own heart (*o*)." This phraſe, the meaning of which has ſometimes been profanely miſrepreſented, as though the Supreme Being regarded with

(*o*) Acts, xiii. 22.

indifference

indifference the heinous tranſgreſſions into which David was occaſionally betrayed; refers to the earneſt and prevailing deſire of David faithfully to ſerve God, and his unfeigned contrition when he was enſnared into guilt. It ſeems alſo to allude particularly to his utter abhorrence of idolatry (*p*).

Solomon, ſurrounded with peace and proſperity, and endued from above with that wiſdom which he had juſtly preferred to every worldly poſſeſſion, immediately on

(*p*) So God, by the mouth of the prophet Ahijah, ſaid to Jeroboam, "Thou haſt not been as my ſervant "David, who kept my commandments, and who fol- "lowed me with all his heart, to do that only which was "right in mine eyes. But thou haſt done evil above all "that were before thee: *for thou haſt gone and made thee* "*other gods and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and* "*haſt caſt me behind thy back.*" 1 Kings, xiv. 8, 9. And of Solomon it is ſaid that when he was old "his wives "*turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart* "*was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart* "*of David his father.*" 1 Kings, xi. 4. The phraſe, a heart "perfect" or "not perfect," and other equivalent expreſſions, are frequently uſed in the Scriptures to characteriſe the conduct of ſubſequent kings of Iſrael reſpecting idolatry. See 1 Kings, xv. 3. 11. 14. 2 Kings, x. 31. 2 Chron. xxii. 9.—xxv. 2. 14, &c.—xxxi. 1. 3.

his

his acceſſion began to erect the Temple; and finiſhed it in leſs than eight years. Afterwards it was dedicated to God with the utmoſt ſolemnity by the king and the aſſembled people of Iſrael. The Lord teſtified his acceptance of the building thus conſecrated to him by filling it with his glory: "the cloud filled the Houſe of the "Lord; ſo that the prieſts could not ſtand "to miniſter becauſe of the cloud: for "the glory of the Lord had filled the "Houſe of the Lord (*q*)." And afterwards God appeared unto Solomon, and declared that if the kings and people of Iſrael would continue faithful in their obedience, his eyes and his heart ſhould be on that Temple perpetually; but that otherwiſe it ſhould be utterly deſtroyed. From that time the altar in the Temple became, conformably to the Divine command given unto Moſes (*r*), the eſtabliſhed and only lawful place for offering burnt ſacrifices unto God.

(*q*) 1 Kings, viii. 10, 11. (*r*) Deut. xii. 11.

Notwithſtanding the ſignal marks of Divine favour which he had enjoyed, Solomon in his declining years was ſeduced by his foreign wives into idolatry. And although there is great reaſon to believe that he afterwards repented; and in the ſeaſon of his grief and remorſe compoſed the book of Eccleſiaſtes, in which he feelingly proclaims the vanity of every thing except holineſs; he was puniſhed with the information that the ſovereignty over ten of the tribes of Iſrael ſhould be taken from his family, and given to Jeroboam, one of his officers. Immediately after the death of Solomon, the raſh and intemperate anſwer of his ſon Rehoboam to the Iſraelites, who requeſted to be delivered from the burdens impoſed upon them by the deceaſed monarch, was the incident employed by the hand of Providence to effect the predicted revolution. The ten tribes revolted from the Houſe of David: and Jeroboam became their king, and Samaria their capital. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained under the government of Rehoboam. From

that

that time the two kingdoms, diſcriminated by the appellations of Iſrael and Judah, continued diſtinct. This ſeparation took place about nine hundred and ſeventy-five years before Chriſt.

The men of Iſrael were bound, purſuant to the Moſaic law, to preſent themſelves three times in a year in ſolemn aſſembly before the Lord (*s*) at Jeruſalem. But Jeroboam, fearing leſt they ſhould thus be led to return to the dominion of their former maſter, would not truſt his power in the hands of God who had beſtowed it. He "took counſel" with the irreligious politicians of his court; and received ſuch advice as men of that deſcription commonly give. Profeſſing that the diſtance of Jeruſalem rendered the attendance of his ſubjects there inconvenient to them, he erected two golden calves, one at Dan the other at Bethel, two places at the oppoſite extremities of his dominions; and commanded his people to reſort thither to offer ſacrifices

(*s*) Deut. xvi. 16.

and to worſhip. Unawed by the Divine judgements denounced againſt him, and by thoſe which he miraculouſly experienced (*t*), he reſolutely perſevered in the eſtabliſhment of idolatry. Hence he is diſtinguiſhed in ſubſequent parts of Holy Writ by the awful appellation of "Jeroboam, who did "ſin, and made Iſrael to ſin (*u*):" the man who deliberately renounced his allegiance to his God, and eſtabliſhed the worſhip of idols among his own ſubjects through many generations.

During eighteen ſucceſſive reigns the throne of Jeroboam paſſing, chiefly by conſpiracies and uſurpations, into eight new families, was occupied by princes like himſelf; princes differing from each other in degrees of depravity, but alike reſolute in adhering to the idolatrous worſhip of the golden calves. In vain did the Lord ſend prophet after prophet, and among them Elijah and Eliſha, armed with the power

(*t*) 1 Kings, xiii. 1. to the end.
(*u*) 1 Kings, xiv. 16.—xv. 30, &c. &c.

of working ſtupendous miracles, and commiſſioned to call the nation to repentance, and to predict the vengeance ready to fall on them, if they ſhould continue in their ſins. In vain were the territories of Iſrael cut ſhort and laid waſte by potent enemies raiſed up from time to time as miniſters of the Divine vengeance. At length in the ninth year of the reign of Hoſhea, about thirty years after the foundation of Rome by Romulus, and about ſeven hundred and twenty one years before Chriſt, the Supreme Being poured forth the fulneſs of his indignation on a people, whom neither chaſtiſements nor mercies could reclaim. Shalmaneſer, the king of Aſſyria, took the capital city Samaria, after a ſiege of three years; and became completely maſter of the whole kingdom. It was in thoſe days a maxim of policy among eaſtern conquerors to remove vanquiſhed nations to ſettlements far diſtant from their native country: that, all hopes of returning thither being precluded, and all local incitements calculated to ſtimulate the deſire

of independence and render ſlavery leſs tolerable being removed, the wretched captives might remain leſs prone to inſurrection and revolt. The depopulated territories were uſually repleniſhed with colonies of inhabitants tranſplanted from a remote part of the dominions of the victor. Conformably to this practice Tiglath-Pileſer, king of Aſſyria, having conquered, about twenty years before, the countries of the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manaſſites eaſtward of the Jordan, together with Galilee occupied by the tribe of Nephthali, had carried away the inhabitants into Aſſyria; and had placed them "in Halah, and in "Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the "cities of the Medes." To the ſame cities Shalmaneſer now carried the remainder of the ten tribes: and "brought men from "Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from "Ava, and from Hamath, and from Se-"pharvaim, and placed them in the cities "of Samaria inſtead of the children of "Iſrael; and they poſſeſſed Samaria and dwelt

dwelt in the cities thereof (*v*)." Of the ſubſequent fate of the ten tribes, thus carried into captivity, little is known unto the preſent hour. Many individuals of each tribe appear to have returned about two hundred years afterwards in company with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. But the great maſs of the ten tribes has continued in obſcurity to this day: yet in that obſcurity preſerved, as we believe from the ſure word of prophecy, againſt that appointed period, when all Iſrael ſhall be re-united, and reſtored to their own land.

Let us now return to the kingdom of Judah. There the ſceptre invariably remained, according to the promiſe of God, in the hands of the family of David. The ſucceſſors of Rehoboam, who, like the kings of Iſrael after Jeroboam during a much ſhorter period, were eighteen in number, were of extremely various characters. Some of them, as Aſa, Jehoſhaphat,

(*v*) 1 Chron. v. 26. 1 Kings, xv. 20. 2 Kings, xvii. 6. 24.

Hezekiah, and Joſiah, were bright examples of piety. Others, among whom Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Manaſſeh are conſpicuous, notwithſtanding the denunciations of prophets and the judicial infliction of national calamities, abandoned themſelves to idolatry. Manaſſeh in particular not only "built up again the high places, which "Hezekiah, his father, had deſtroyed; and "reared up altars for Baal, and worſhipped "all the hoſt of heaven and ſerved them;" but, as it were in defiance of the true God, "built altars in the Houſe of the Lord, of "which the Lord had ſaid, In Jeruſalem "will I put my name: and he built altars "for all the hoſt of heaven in the two "courts of the Houſe of the Lord—and "he ſet a graven image of the grove, that "he had made, in the Houſe (*w*)." His conduct during this period was throughout conſiſtent in wickedneſs. "He made his "ſon to paſs through the fire, and obſerv-"ed times, and uſed inchantments, and "dealt with familiar ſpirits and wizards—"

(*w*) 2 Kings, xxi. 3. 7.

and

and ſeduced his "ſubjects to do more evil "than did the nations whom the Lord de-"ſtroyed before the children of Iſrael—and "ſhed innocent blood very much, till he "had filled Jeruſalem from one end to "another (*x*)." The Supreme Being, therefore, declared that the crimes of Judah ſhould be puniſhed by a fate ſimilar to that which had overtaken the guilt of Iſrael. "I will ſtretch over Jeruſalem the line of "Samaria—and I will wipe Jeruſalem as a "man wipeth a diſh, wiping and turning "it upſide down (*y*):" a compariſon deſcribing in the moſt expreſſive terms the utter ſubverſion of the city, and the complete removal of its inhabitants. Captivity and anguiſh opened the eyes of Manaſſeh; and led him to bitter and durable repentance (*z*). But his ſucceſſors imitated him only in tranſgreſſion. The kings of Babylon, foretold from the reign of Hezekiah as inſtruments ordained to execute the wrath of Heaven againſt Judah (*a*), and already

(*x*) 2 Kings xxi. 6. 9. 16. (*y*) 2 Kings, xxi. 13.
(*z*) 2 Chron. xxx. 11. 18. (*a*) 2 Kings, xx. 17.

employed

employed for the chaſtiſement of Manaſſeh, appeared anew before Jeruſalem; unconſcious that, while they were bent ſolely on ambitious views of aggrandizing their empire, they were ſent forth by Providence to fulfil its predetermined purpoſe. About ſix hundred and ſix years before the Chriſtian era Jeruſalem was delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, who ſent to Babylon a part of the veſſels and treaſures of the Temple of the Lord, together with many perſons of the royal blood and of the principal families; and bound Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, in fetters, that he might alſo be carried thither (*b*): but at length permitted him to remain a tributary vaſſal in Judæa. Eight years afterwards the ſon and ſucceſſor of Jehoiakim, together with ten thouſand of his ſubjects, was carried captive into Chaldea (*c*). And finally in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, about five hundred and eighty-eight years before Chriſt, and one hundred and thirty-three years after the commencement of the

(*b*) 2 Chro. xxxvi. 6. Dan. i. 1—6. (*c*) 2 Kin. xxiv. 10, &c.

captivity

captivity of the ten tribes, Jeruſalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar at the end of a ſiege of eighteen months; and, together with the Temple of God, was burned to the ground and utterly deſtroyed. Zedekiah was brought at Riblah into the preſence of Nebuchadnezzar, who after having commanded his eyes to be put out, ſent him in fetters to Babylon: thus fulfilling unawares two ſeemingly diſcordant predictions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel; the former of which prophets had declared concerning Zedekiah that as a captive he ſhould ſee the king of Babylon face to face, and be carried to that city (*d*); the latter, that his eyes ſhould never behold it (*e*). The principal part of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin was alſo led captive into Chaldea (*f*). Over the people of the poorer claſs which were left in the land, and were joined by fugitives from contiguous diſtricts, Gedaliah was appointed governor. He being ſhortly afterwards killed by a conſpiracy; the remnant

(*d*) Jerem. xxxii. 4. and xxxiv. 3. (*e*) Ezek. xii. 13.
(*f*) 2 Chron. xxxvi 20.

of

of the Jews, dreading the vengeance of the Chaldeans, reſolved to fly into Egypt. This meaſure Jeremiah was directed by the Almighty to forbid; and was commiſſioned alſo to inform the Jews, that if they perſiſted in their deſign, they ſhould be overtaken in the country where they ſought for refuge by their dreaded enemy Nebuchadnezzar; who, in the ſublime language of Scripture, ſhould "array himſelf with the "land of Egypt as a ſhepherd putteth on a "garment (*g*)." But the people would not be reſtrained. Carrying Jeremiah with them, they haſted into Egypt; which country, according to the Divine declaration was ſubdued about ſixteen years afterwards by the king of Babylon. Thus was Judæa emptied of its inhabitants. So extreme was the predicted deſolation to be, that, four years after the burning of Jeruſalem, while Nebuchadnezzar was employed in the ſiege of Tyre; Nebuzaradan, the captain of his guard, ſwept away to Babylon the ſcanty reliques of the people, who had collected

(*g*) Jerem. xlii. and xliii. 12.

together

together in their native land, amounting to ſeven hundred and forty-five perſons (*h*).

The duration of the Babylonian captivity had been previouſly limited by the Supreme Being to the term of ſeventy years, which are to be computed from the captivity of Jehoiakim in the ſix hundred and ſeventh year before Chriſt; and the deſtined period had been revealed to the Jews by the mouth of Jeremiah at the time of its commencement (*i*). Iſaiah, ſpeaking prophetically concerning Cyrus above an hundred years antecedently to his birth, had pronounced him to be the monarch deſtined in the counſels of God to reſtore the people of Judah to their native land (*k*). Accordingly, "in the firſt year of Cyrus, king of "Perſia," (the ſecond year after he had taken Babylon, and the firſt after he had become ſovereign of the eaſt by the death of his father Cambyſes king of Perſia, and his father-in-law Cyaxares king of Media;

(*h*) Jerem. lii. 30. (*i*) Jerem. xxv. 11, 12.
(*k*) Iſa. xliv. 28. xlv. 1–6.

and

and five hundred and thirty-ſix years before the Chriſtian era,) " that the word of the " Lord ſpoken by the mouth of Jeremiah " might be accompliſhed; the Lord ſtirred " up the ſpirit of Cyrus king of Perſia, " that he made a proclamation throughout " all his kingdom, and put it alſo in writing, " ſaying: Thus ſaith Cyrus, king of Perſia. " All the kingdoms of the earth hath the " Lord God of Heaven given me: and he " hath charged me to build him an houſe " in Jeruſalem, which is in Judah. Who " is there among you of all his people? " The Lord his God be with him: and " let him go up (*l*)." Cyrus at the ſame time commanded that aſſiſtance ſhould be given to the poorer Jews, in order to enable them to undertake the journey; and delivered up the veſſels of gold and ſilver, brought away from the Temple of God to Babylon, that they might be placed in the new Temple, which was now to be erected (*m*).

(*l*) 2 Chron. xxvi. 22, 23. (*m*) Ezra, i. 4. 7, 8.

In conſequence of this encouragement, great numbers belonging to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, having been joined alſo by many individuals of the ten tribes; and amounting altogether to near fifty thouſand, ſervants and proſelytes being included (*n*); returned to Jeruſalem under the conduct of Zerubbabel (otherwiſe called Sheſhbazzar (*o*)) a chief deſcended from David, and of Joſhua the high prieſt. In the beginning of the following year they proceeded to rebuild the Temple on its old foundations. In this work the Samaritans deſired to join. Theſe were the poſterity of the Cutheans and other coloniſts, who had been placed about two hundred years before that time by the king of Aſſyria in the land of Iſrael; and had united with the ſervice of Jehovah the worſhip of their peculiar idols (*p*). The Jews rejected the propoſal: and the Samaritans, eager for revenge, exerted themſelves to impede the rebuilding of the city partly by force of

(*n*) Ezra, ii. 64, 65. (*o*) Compare Ezra, iii. 8. 10. with v. 16.
(*p*) 2 Kings, xvii. 24—41.

arms,

arms, and partly by misrepresentations addressed to the court of Persia (q). The work was by these means interrupted: but a favourable decree having at length been obtained from Darius, it was resumed and completed: and the new Temple was solemnly dedicated twenty years after the Jews had begun to rebuild it. The Jews had been strongly excited to zeal and perseverance in the undertaking by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. And when the aged Jews, some of whom had seen the former Temple, wept at the recollection of its superior magnificence; deploring also the irrecoverable loss of the ark, the rod of Aaron, the two tables of stone, the pot of manna which had been preserved by

(q) This hostile conduct appears to have been the source of that rooted aversion, with which the Jews continued for several centuries to view the Samaritans. It was aggravated by subsequent quarrels, and by the asylum always afforded at Samaria to fugitive and discontented Jews. Long before the time of our Saviour the Samaritans had entirely renounced idolatry. Still, however, the Jews had "no dealings with the Samaritans;" and used the very name of Samaritan as a term of the highest reproach.

Divine

Divine appointment from the days of Joſhua, and the reſt of its miraculous diſtinctions; Haggai was commiſſioned to aſſure them that the glory of this latter houſe ſhould be greater than the glory of the former (*r*): a prediction fulfilled when that latter houſe was glorified by the preſence of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God.

About fifty years afterwards Ezra, inveſted with ample powers by Artaxerxes, arrived from Babylon; bringing with him ſome additional veſſels belonging to the Temple, and accompanied by about fifteen hundred Jews. He employed himſelf with great diligence in reforming abuſes and tranſgreſſions prevalent among the people. Thirteen years after his arrival he was joined by Nehemiah, appointed governor of Judæa by Artaxerxes, with authority to repair the ruined walls of Jeruſalem: an undertaking which, notwithſtanding the oppoſition of factions and of ſurrounding enemies, was at length effected. At this

(*r*) Ezra, iii. 12. Haggai, ii. 2—9.

time Ezra appears to have devoted his attention wholly to religious concerns, and to the collection and reviſal of the canonical books of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament. The Jewiſh people now deliberately renewed their covenant with God: and from that period to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans, they faithfully abſtained from every ſpecies of idolatrous worſhip.

After the days of Nehemiah no mention is made of any diſtinct governor of Judæa while it continued ſubject to the Perſians. The country was regarded as a part of the province of Syria. In the time of Alexander the Great the Jews exhibited a ſignal proof of fidelity to their engagements by refuſing, on the ground of the allegiance which they owed to Perſia, to ſupply that conqueror, then occupied in the ſiege of Tyre, with the ſuccours which he required of them. Alexander, having at length rendered himſelf maſter of Tyre, marched, inflamed with reſentment, at the head of

his

his army towards Jeruſalem. At a ſhort diſtance from that city he was met by a ſolemn proceſſion conducted by the High Prieſt, Jaddua, in his pontifical robes. Alexander, on their near approach, haſtened forward; and to the extreme aſtoniſhment of his followers, bowed himſelf down before the High Prieſt, and adored the name of Jehovah inſcribed on his mitre. In reply to Parmenio, who expreſſed his ſurpriſe that the victorious monarch of ſo many nations ſhould pay reverence to a Jewiſh prieſt; Alexander declared that many years before, when he had been revolving his meditated expedition againſt Perſia, the appearance of this very perſon had ſtood before him, and had promiſed him ſucceſs in the name of God. Alexander accompanied the High Prieſt to Jeruſalem, offered ſacrifices in the Temple, and beſtowed many privileges and immunities on the Jews: but gave an evaſive anſwer to the Samaritans, whom his unexpected bounty to the Jews encouraged to apply

for ſimilar favours (*s*). Nor were theſe the only proofs of regard which he ſhewed to the Jews. When he founded Alexandria, he fixed many of that nation there; and beſtowed on them the ſame rights as were enjoyed by the Macedonians. And when the Samaritans rebelled againſt him, he aſſigned their country to the Jews, to be held by them under the ſame exemptions from tribute as Judæa.

Soon after the death of Alexander, an event which took place three hundred and twenty-three years before Chriſt; Paleſtine, in the diviſion of the Macedonian empire, fell under the power of Ptolemy king of Egypt; and about an hundred years afterwards paſſed into the hands of the Grecian kings of Syria; who permitted the Jews to be governed by their own laws, under the High Prieſt and his council. In conſequence of the intermediate ſituation of their country between Egypt and Syria they

(*s*) Joſephi Antiq. lib. ii. c. 8. and ſee Biſhop Newton's Diſſertations on the Prophecies, 3d edition, vol. ii. p. 37–47.

ſuffered much and frequently from the contentions, which aroſe between thoſe rival empires. The Greek language gradually ſpread into familiar uſe among them. And from their connection with foreigners they progreſſively imbibed foreign manners and foreign vices. Their High Prieſts became corrupt, obtaining the office by purchaſe from the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes; and recommending themſelves to him by lending their aid to draw aſide the people from the obſervance of the Moſaic law to the adoption of Grecian cuſtoms. By his hand, however, Providence inflicted on the Jews a memorable chaſtiſement. Irritated by the oppoſition which he had experienced in ſome of his plans, he ſeized upon the city; ſlaughtered or ſold for ſlaves vaſt multitudes of the inhabitants; deſpoiled and ſhattered the Temple itſelf; and at length aboliſhed the daily ſacrifice; burned all the copies of the law which he could diſcover; fixed an image of Jupiter in the Temple; and endeavoured to conſtrain the people throughout the whole land by the moſt

cruel tortures to ſubmit to the worſhip of idols. After ſome few years, and about one hundred and ſixty-ſeven before the Chriſtian era, God was pleaſed to raiſe up a deliverer to his people in Mattathias the Maccabee, a prieſt of equal piety and fortitude; who levied an army againſt the tyrant, and puſhed on the war with ſucceſs. After his death, the celebrated Judas Maccabeus and his other ſons repeatedly overcame the Syrian armies; and ultimately expelled them from Judæa. The Temple was repaired and purified; the obſervance of the Moſaic law reſtored; and the ſupreme authority, civil as well as eccleſiaſtical, was united for ſeveral generations in the head of the Maccabean family, of whom Ariſtobulus was the firſt who aſſumed the title of king. In a conteſt for the crown between two of his deſcendants, about ſixty-five years before Chriſt, both parties applied for aſſiſtance to the Romans. Pompey availed himſelf of theſe diſſenſions to render Judæa tributary to Rome. He appointed Hyrcanus, one of the competi-

tors,

tors, High Prieſt; but allowed him not to poſſeſs any other denomination than that of prince. Some years afterwards the avarice of Craſſus plundered the Temple of all its treaſures. During the domeſtic troubles which engaged the attention of the Romans on the death of Julius Cæſar; Hyrcanus was deprived of his authority by his nephew Antigonus, who aſſumed the regal title. Herod, an Edomite, the ſon of one of the officers of Hyrcanus, repairing to Rome, and being there appointed king of Judæa, took Antigonus priſoner; and ſent him into Italy, where he was put to death. Being thus eſtabliſhed in the quiet poſſeſſion of the country, Herod gradually augmented his dominions: and expended vaſt ſums in adorning Jeruſalem, and in repairing and enlarging the buildings of the Temple. To his family and his ſubjects he was a cruel and ſanguinary tyrant. His reign is memorable for the birth of the Saviour of the world; whom he dreaded as a rival, and endeavoured to deſtroy by the ſlaughter at Bethlehem. In the following year, he

died in the agonies of a moſt loathſome diſtemper. His territories were diſtributed by the Romans, who ratified the diſpoſition which he had made in his will, among his three ſons, thenceforth called tetrarchs or ethnarchs. Archelaus governed the ancient poſſeſſions of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, together with Samaria, and the land of Edom. Herod Antipas, by whom John the Baptiſt was beheaded and Jeſus Chriſt derided before his cruciſixion, ruled in Galilee and Peræa. Philip obtained the diſtricts of Trachonitis and Ituræa. Archelaus, in the ſeventh year of the Chriſtian era, (which era, according to the received computation, begins with the fifth year after the birth of Chriſt,) was deprived of his government by the Romans, in conſequence of the complaints of his ſubjects. His dominions were immediately reduced into the ſtate of a Roman province. On the death of Philip, and the depoſition of Antipas, the Roman emperor Caligula gave their dominions, with the title of king, to Herod Agrippa, the perſon who put to death the

Apoſtle

Apoſtle James, and impriſoned Peter (*t*), and was grandſon of the firſt Herod. He was ſucceeded in his title and part of his territories by his own ſon of the ſame name, the Agrippa before whom Paul (*u*) was produced by Feſtus the Roman governor.

In the mean time Jeſus Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, had manifeſted himſelf in Judæa, and fulfilled his miniſtry. Though uniting in himſelf the accompliſhment of every ancient prophecy reſpecting the Redeemer of mankind; born of the tribe of Judah, of the lineage of David, of a pure virgin, in the town of Bethlehem; having for his forerunner a prophet, John the Baptiſt, commiſſioned to preach repentance in the power and ſpirit of Elijah; performing all thoſe miracles which the predicted Saviour was to work, in proof of his Divine authority; executing his office at the preciſe time prefixed near five hundred years before by the Prophet Daniel; and repeatedly receiving in the ſight and hearing of

(*t*) Acts, xii. (*u*) Acts, xxv. xxvi.

the

the people ſpecial tokens, in atteſtation of his Meſſiahſhip, from God his father; He was ignominiouſly rejected by the Jewiſh nation. One general cauſe of offence was his appearance in that humble ſtation, which the prophet Iſaiah had expreſsly (*v*) foretold: while the ambitious and prejudiced minds of the Jews were blindly attached to the idea of a temporal Meſſiah, who ſhould expel every foreign enemy from the land of Canaan, and reign in triumph on the throne of Jeruſalem. Among the higher claſſes, the principal enemies of Chriſt were the Scribes, the Phariſees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians. The Scribes, a proud and corrupt ſet of men, were the eſtabliſhed teachers and expounders of the Moſaic law. The Phariſees were a religious ſect, who diſtorted that law from its genuine import by the traditional interpretations and acceſſions with which they loaded it: and under the maſk of much outward and ceremonial ſanctity diſguiſed the utmoſt depravity of heart

(*v*) Iſaiah, liii.

and

and conduct. The Sadducees held as their distinguishing tenet, that there was to be no future life; and were, as might be expected, practically regardless of virtue in this. The Herodians were, as their name intimates, persons devoted to the interests of Herod; and formed a political faction rather than a religious party. These jarring sects, enraged at the boldness and severity with which Christ reproved their vices, and dreading from his influence the ruin of their power, co-operated for his destruction. The common people at first received him with joy: but afterwards, according to the usual instability of popular favour, they listened to the calumnious artifices of his persecutors, and aided with vehement and clamorous importunity the demand of their superiors for his crucifixion. With this demand Pilate, the Roman governor, though avowing his conviction of the perfect innocence of Christ, and vainly attempting by washing his hands in the presence of the multitude to transfer the whole guilt of that innocent blood from himself

himſelf to them; while they blaſphemouſly cried out, "his blood be on us and on our "children;" flagitiouſly complied. Chriſt was nailed to the croſs; and, while the earth quaked, and the heavens were darkened, and the beholders ſtood aghaſt with aſtoniſhment and terror, yielded up his life as the great atoning ſacrifice for the ſins of the human race.

The meaſure of Jewiſh guilt was now full: and the vengeance of Heaven, of which that infatuated people had been mercifully forewarned by the prophets and by Chriſt himſelf, was poured out upon them: and poured out by the hands of that very nation whom they had inſtigated to cut off the Meſſiah. Irritated by the oppreſſion of the Roman governors, they broke out into open rebellion againſt Florus, in the reign of Nero. Ceſtius, and afterwards Veſpaſian, took many cities, and ſlaughtered immenſe multitudes of the Jews. At length, at the time of the paſſover, in the ſeventy-firſt year of the Chriſtian era, when the principal part of the nation, aſſembled

from

from many different countries for the purpose of celebrating that solemnity, were cooped up, as victims prepared for slaughter, within the walls of Jerusalem; Titus encamped his army before that devoted city. Unconscious that he was exactly fulfilling the predictions of Christ (*w*), he surrounded the whole city with an uninterrupted bulwark, nearly five miles in circuit. The miseries which the Jews then sustained from famine, from pestilence, from the assaults of the Romans, and from the implacable fury of contending parties among themselves, far surpass in horror every account of any siege in the records of the world (*x*). The city was taken, burned to the ground, and razed from its foundations. Eleven hundred thousand Jews perished during the siege. Of ninety-seven thousand captives, some were reserved

(*w*) Luke, xlx. 43.

(*x*) See a very striking summary of the events of these "days of vengeance," and of the completion of every particular in the prophecies of Christ respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, in Archbishop Newcome's "Observations on our Lord's Conduct." 2d edit. 8vo. p. 203—276.

to

to grace the triumphal return of Titus to Rome; and the reſt diſperſed as ſlaves or as criminals throughout the empire. A ſubſequent revolt, in the reign of Adrian, carried on with the moſt furious outrages by the Jews, great numbers of whom had again collected in their native land, was followed by the ſlaughter of more than five hundred thouſand, and by their entire expulſion from Judea. From that day to the preſent, during a period of ſeventeen centuries, they have had no national exiſtence. They have continued, according to the unfailing truth of prophecy, "ſcattered "among all people from one end of the "earth unto the other; an aſtoniſhment, "a proverb, and a by-word among all "nations (y)."

Though, in the language of St. Paul, "the vail is ſtill upon their hearts (z);" though they ſtill continue inveterately hoſtile to Chriſtianity; yet to the devout and reflecting among them the diſappointment of their expectations as to the coming

(y) Deut. xxviii. 37. 64. (z) 2 Cor. iii. 15.

of

of the Meſſiah, and the long continuance of their calamitous diſperſion, are ſubjects of extreme embarraſſment. When Jeſus Chriſt entered on his public miniſtry, they were confeſſedly looking out (*a*) with great anxiety for the promiſed Redeemer; as the time predicted by Daniel for his manifeſtation was arrived. Jeſus Chriſt they rejected: and no other perſon has ſince appeared, in whom their deſcendants perceive any of the characteriſtics of the Meſſiah. To account for this ſeeming failure of the accompliſhment of the prediction has long been, as it ſtill continues, to the Jews a very difficult and perplexing taſk. Some of their rabbis allege in general terms, that the wickedneſs of their nation prevented the Meſſiah from being

(*a*) Thus, when John the Baptiſt began to preach, "the people were in expectation, and all men muſed in "their hearts whether he were the Chriſt or not;" Luke, iii. 15. and a deputation of prieſts and Levites was ſent from Jeruſalem to put the queſtion to him, John, i. 19–27. Tacitus (Hiſt. lib. v. c. 13.), and Suetonius (lib. viii. c. 4.), record the general hope of the approach of the predicted Deliverer.

ſent at the appointed period. Others, finding themſelves unable to reconcile this ſolution with the truth of the promiſes of God, affirm, that he was actually ſent into the world at the time ſpecified by Daniel; but that he forbore, in conſequence of the ſinful ſtate of the Jews, to make himſelf known; and that, for ſimilar reaſons, he has ſtill continued in obſcurity. They are however entirely unable to diſcover what thoſe heinous tranſgreſſions are, which have occaſioned their diſappointment and their miſeries. From idolatry, the great crime of their forefathers, they have been free for above two thouſand years. And for that crime, deteſtable as it was in the ſight of God, a captivity of only ſeventy years was deemed a ſufficient puniſhment.—"I "would fain learn of thee, out of the "teſtimonies of the law, and the prophets, "and other Scriptures, why the Jews are "thus ſmitten in this captivity wherein "we are: which may be properly called "the perpetual anger of God, becauſe it "hath no end. For it is now above a

"thouſand

" thouſand years ſince we were carried " captive by Titus. And yet our fathers, " who worſhipped idols, killed the pro- " phets, and caſt the law behind their " back, were puniſhed only with a ſeventy " years captivity; and then brought home " again! But now there is no end of our " calamities: nor do the prophets promiſe " any." It was thus that Rabbi Samuel Moroccanus wrote about ſeven hundred years ſince, to his friend (*b*). The great council of the Jews aſſembled five hundred and fifty years afterwards in Hungary to deliberate on that very ſubject, found it altogether inexplicable (*c*). It is at this moment equally inexplicable to the Jews. Nay, every additional year aggravates the difficulty. But the difficulty, inſuperable to the Jews, is none to us. Their own imprecation has been tremendouſly

(*b*) See Biſhop Patrick's Commentary on Geneſis, xlix. 10.

(*c*) Appendix to the Biſhop of Clogher's Diſſertation on the Revelations.

fulfilled. The blood of Chriſt has been "on them and on their children."

Such has been the hiſtory of the choſen people of God from the calling of their forefather Abraham to the preſent day; a period of nearly three thouſand eight hundred years. Their ſituation has in all ages been characteriſed by miracles. Their preſervation is at this moment a ſtanding miracle. The hoſtile tribes of invaders, who ſucceſſively eſtabliſhed themſelves in Great Britain, diſcordant in religion and in manners, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, are all abſorbed and loſt in one common maſs. The innumerable hoſts of Pagan barbarians, who overwhelmed the Chriſtian empire of Rome, ſpeedily coaleſced with the natives whom they had ſubdued, each hoſt in the region where it ſettled, into one homogeneous aſſemblage. Faith and practice, laws and cuſtoms, even perſonal appearance and complexion, became ſimilar, in the courſe of a very few centuries, among the victors and the vanquiſhed.

Not

Not ſo with the Jews. Scattered in ſmall parcels throughout many nations; nowhere living under their own laws, and in few places indulged in the free exerciſe of their religion; urged by general contempt, and even in many Chriſtian countries by ſhameful oppreſſion, to withdraw themſelves from notice by aſſimilating themſelves to the natives among whom they dwell; they have every where multiplied under affliction, and have every where continued a diſtinct and ſeparate people. Why have they thus been exempted from the common fate of nations? They have been exempted, that after having in their diſperſion exhibited to the inhabitants of oppoſite extremities of the earth a ſtupendous proof of the power and the juſtice of God; they may be reſtored at the time predetermined in his counſels to the perpetual poſſeſſion of their native land. There is ſcarcely any topic on which prophecy is more copious in the Old Teſtament, than on the final reſtoration of the Twelve Tribes of Iſrael. Our Saviour,

when he foretells that "Jeruſalem ſhall "be trodden down by the Gentiles *until* "*the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* (*d*);" clearly implies that after an appointed time it ſhould revert to its original poſſeſſors. St. Paul, in perfect harmony with the old prophets, predicts the future converſion of the Jews to the religion of their crucified Saviour; and the powerful and glorious effect which their converſion, together with the ſignal wonders with which their re-eſtabliſhment ſhall be attended, will produce in opening the eyes of unbelieving nations, and convincing them of the truth of the Chriſtian faith (*e*).

From the hiſtory of this people let it be your care to draw and apply to your own heart and conduct the great practical truth, ſo forcibly impreſſed, and ſo beautifully illuſtrated by the Apoſtle (*f*). "Be- "cauſe of unbelief they were broken off: "and thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be not "high-minded; but fear." Reflect on

(*d*) Luke, xxi. 24. (*e*) Romans, xi.
(*f*) Romans, xvii. 24.

the

the unparalleled bleſſings by which they were diſtinguiſhed. They are the choſen nation, "to whom pertaineth the adoption, "and the glory, and the covenants, and "the giving of the law, and the ſervice "of God, and the promiſes; whoſe are "the fathers; and of whom, as concern-"ing the fleſh, Chriſt came, who is over "all, God, bleſſed for ever (*g*)." They were the favoured "olive-tree," planted in the vineyard of God. The branches became unfruitful, and were broken off; and the Gentiles, the "branches of the "wild olive-tree," were grafted into their place. "Be not high-minded; but fear. "If God ſpared not the natural branches, "take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee. "Behold the goodneſs and ſeverity of "God: on them which fell, ſeverity: "but towards thee, goodneſs, if thou con-"tinue in his goodneſs: otherwiſe thou "alſo ſhalt be cut off." Let this leſſon of ſtedfaſtneſs in faith and holy obedience

(*g*) Romans, ix. 4, 5.

recur to your boſom, whenever you behold an individual of the Jewiſh race. Let it teach you to behold him with humility, and with kindneſs; and to meditate on the dealings of your Maker with the tribes of Iſrael. And while you conſider the paſt and the preſent ſtate of the choſen deſcendents of Abraham; remember the reſtoration that awaits them. They are "the natural branches:" and when "they "no longer abide in unbelief, God will "graft them in again."

There is yet another leſſon of uſeful inſtruction which the conſideration of the Jewiſh hiſtory may impreſs with particular force upon the mind. The interpoſitions by which Providence guided and protected the Jews were in general, as it has already been obſerved, in a high degree miraculous. Yet all theſe ſignal and unmerited favours produced not in that people either durable gratitude or obedience. Remember then, in the firſt place, the favours which God has beſtowed and is ſtill beſtowing upon yourſelf. Theſe bleſſings

are

are not the leſs becauſe they are beſtowed daily and hourly; nor becauſe they are beſtowed on many other perſons as well as upon you. Theſe bleſſings are as truly the free and unmerited gifts of your Almighty Benefactor, as the miracles wrought for the deliverance of the Iſraelites in Egypt, in the wilderneſs, in the land of Canaan. What title had you to the bleſſings of creation, of protection, of redemption, more than the Iſraelites had to a paſſage on dry ground through the Red Sea; to the preſence of God in a cloudy pillar to guide them by day, and in a pillar of flame by night; to the ſupply of manna, during nearly forty years; to the ſupernatural deſtruction of the army of Sennacherib; or to the warnings during many centuries of a ſucceſſion of inſpired prophets? Were mighty works wrought by the hand of Omnipotence for the Jews? Thoſe very works were wrought not for the Jews only, but for your admonition; for your benefit. Mighty as they were, mightier have been wrought for you.

Chriſt, of whoſe coming and office the Jews had learned through the medium of prophecies then involved, as to matters of detail, in much obſcurity, has ſince their day deſcended from Heaven; has lived as man, and ſuffered more than man; has made that full atonement on the croſs, which the law given by Moſes was intended only to prefigure and introduce. The interceſſion of Chriſt, now pleading for you at the right hand of God, was to the Jews altogether unknown. The ſanctifying aid of the Holy Spirit of God, to enable you to will and to do what is acceptable to the Deity, was by the Jews very imperfectly underſtood. Do you admit the magnitude of thoſe your obligations to Heaven? Aſk yourſelf then, in the ſecond place, whether you are leading ſuch a life as correſponds with an avowed ſenſe of thoſe obligations: ſuch a life as correſponds with a conviction of the extraordinary bleſſings conferred upon you by the Almighty of his own free grace. While you are wondering that the Jews, enlightened by immediate

mediate communications from above, could relapse with such frequency into the darkness of idolatry; ask yourself whether, in the full enjoyment of greater light, you are not deviating into the paths of darkness. "The covetous man," saith the Scripture, "an idolater (*h*)," and "hath no inheritance "in the kingdom of Christ and of God." The glutton is branded in the sacred volume with the same stigma (*i*): and his end is declared to be "destruction." Whenever you permit any inclination, any passion to predominate in your heart over the fear and the love of God; you incur the guilt of idolatry. And unless through the Divine grace you sincerely repent, and turn from sin unto habitual holiness; you shall have "no inheritance in the kingdom "of Christ and of God:" your "end shall "be destruction."

(*h*) Ephes. v. 5. (*i*) Philipp. iii. 19.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In the preceding Chapters the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament have been regarded as ſacred records of unqueſtionable authority. As the faith of Chriſtians ought in every particular point to be eſtabliſhed on rational evidence and ſober conviction; it will be proper in the preſent Chapter to lay before the reader a brief ſtatement of the grounds, on which the claim of the Jewiſh Scriptures to his belief and reverence is eſtabliſhed.

The Old Teſtament reſolves itſelf into two leading diviſions; the canonical books, and the apocryphal books (*a*). The canonical books

(*a*) Theſe general terms, together with many of the modern names, as Geneſis, Exodus, &c. by which the books of the Old Teſtament are diſtinguiſhed, have been borrowed from the denominations uſed by the Greek tranſlators

books are thoſe which were written by the aid and under the guidance of Divine inſpiration. The apocryphal books were compoſed by uninſpired men; and are therefore liable to error: but, on account of the religious inſtruction and the hiſtorical facts which they contain, were ſubjoined by the Jews, yet ſeparately and as a detached appendix, to the ſacred volume; and have been for the ſame reaſons continued in that place and character by the Chriſtian church.

The canonical books were again ſubdivided by the Jews, for the ſake of convenient reference and quotation, into three claſſes; not ſo diſtinguiſhed through any difference in the authority aſſigned to them,

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tranſlators and commentators. The words "canon," and "canonical," are derived from Κανων, a rule: and imply that the authenticity and inſpiration of the books of Scripture to which they are applied have not been haſtily taken for granted; but have been examined and aſcertained by the proper rule or criterion. Apocrypha and apocryphal, words derived from αποκρυπτω, to hide, denote that the writings to which they are affixed are not of manifeſt and indiſputable authority.

(for

(for in that reſpect they were all held perfectly equal,) but through a degree of difference in the ſubjects of which they reſpectively treat. Theſe claſſes were denominated "the Law," "the Prophets," and "the Pſalms." "The Law" contained the five books of Moſes; Geneſis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (*b*): and received its name from the ſubject moſt prominent in thoſe books. In "the Pro-" phets" were comprehended not only the books of Iſaiah, and of all the other prophets to Malachi incluſively, together with the book of Job; but likewiſe the hiſtorical books of Joſhua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Eſther: theſe books alſo having been written or reviſed by prophets. "The "Pſalms (*c*)," included Proverbs, Eccleſiaſtes,

(*b*) The five books of Moſes are frequently termed the Pentateuch, a words of Greek etymology, implying a collection of five volumes.

(*c*) This claſs was alſo termed emphatically by the Jews "writings" (chetubim); and by the Greeks hagiographa, ſacred writings. In later times we have become accuſtomed

ſaſtes, and the Song of Solomon, together with the book of Pſalms; from which book, as being placed firſt, and of primary importance, this concluding ſubdiviſion received its appellation (*d*).

What proof then of the inſpiration and authenticity of the canonical Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, in the very form in which we have them at this hour, is the utmoſt which even an objector could reaſonably demand? He might require this and this only: ſatisfactory evidence that

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tomed to apply the terms "Scriptures," that is to ſay, "the writings," by way of eminence, and "the Bible," ("the Book," from the Greek word βιβλος,) to the Old and New Teſtaments taken collectively.

(*d*) The number of canonical books in our Bible is thirty-nine: whereas Joſephus and other Jewiſh writers enumerate only twenty-two. The cauſe of the ſeeming difference is this: the Jews unite Judges and Ruth into one volume, or book; the two books of Samuel they count as one book, and alſo thoſe of Kings, and of Chronicles, reſpectively; Ezra and Nehemiah form one book; the Prophecies and Lamentations of Jeremiah one; and the twelve minor prophets, ſo called merely on account of the comparative brevity of their compoſitions, one.

thoſe

thoſe Scriptures were written under the ſuperintendence of inſpiration: and that they have been tranſmitted in their primeval integrity to the preſent day. That proof, I apprehend, may be demonſtratively furniſhed.

It will, however, be proper antecedently to ſtate with preciſion what we mean, when we affirm that the books in queſtion were written under the ſuperintendence of inſpiration. We do not mean that the Holy Spirit of God dictated to the inſpired writer every word, or every ſentence, of his compoſition. The Divine interference to ſuch an extent was not requiſite, as far as we may preſume to judge, for the attainment of the objects which inſpiration was deſigned to accompliſh. And the opinion of its interference to that extent appears to be contradicted by the great ſimilarity of ſtyle and manner, which is found to pervade the writings of any one of the inſpired penmen conſidered ſingly; and by the ſtriking difference in ſentiment and language, by which the ſeveral writers are

diſtinguiſhed from each other: circumſtances which indicate that each writer was permitted to follow in an ample degree the natural bent of his faculties and thoughts as to the mode of expreſſing the Divine communications. Neither do we mean that the mind of the prophet or hiſtorian was in every caſe ſupernaturally impreſſed with the full knowledge of facts, which, by his own preſent obſervation, or by his diſtant recollection, or even by true and ſufficient intelligence received from others, he already was thoroughly competent to deſcribe. We mean that inſpiration was given ſo far as it was eſſentially neceſſary to effect all the purpoſes, ſpecial and general, for which it was beſtowed; namely, to encourage the righteous and reclaim the guilty; to confirm the truth and unfold the import of the Jewiſh diſpenſation; and when that introductory ſyſtem ſhould be done away, to demonſtrate the Divine origin, illuſtrate the nature, and forward the univerſal dominion, of the religion of Jeſus Chriſt. For theſe

purpoſes

purpoſes it ſeems eſſentially neceſſary that, in communicating religious truths, in declaring a revelation of unknown, or imperfectly known, tranſactions, and in predicting future events, the inſtrument employed ſhould be preſerved from all error; and that in reciting facts from his own knowledge, and in drawing concluſions by the natural powers of his judgement, he ſhould be preſerved from material inaccuracy and omiſſion. That inſpiration was vouchſafed further the Scriptures do not pronounce: that it was neceſſary further, there appears no ſufficient reaſon to conclude: and conſequently, that it was given further, is a poſition for which there ſeems no obligation to contend.

We may now proceed to ſtate the ſeveral proofs, general and particular, which ſhew that the canonical books of the Old Teſtament were written under the ſuperintendence of inſpiration; and that they were preſerved in their original integrity to the days of our Saviour. That they have been preſerved in the ſame ſtate from the

coming of Chriſt to the preſent time is a truth which will afterwards be eſtabliſhed.

The books of Geneſis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, containing an account of the creation, and of the fall of man, the heads of the early annals of the world, and a full recital of the Jewiſh law, and of the events which had happened to that nation until it had now finally reached the borders of the land of Canaan, were written by Moſes. An exception however muſt be made of the concluding chapter of Deuteronomy, evidently added after his death in order to complete his hiſtory: and perhaps of one or two paſſages (as of that in Geneſis (*e*) reſpecting the kings of Edom) which may have been inſerted by ſome ſucceeding prophet, not improbably by Ezra, for the purpoſe of conveying illuſtration or additional intelligence. I mention theſe ſlight exceptions, obvious as they are; becauſe abſurd cavils have ſometimes been founded upon them, as though they afforded an argument to ſhew

(*e*) Gen. xxxvi. 31—43.

that Moſes was not the author of the other parts of the books. The proofs of his having been the author of thoſe books are numerous and deciſive. The fact has ever been firmly believed by the Jews; and continues to this day to be one of the thirteen articles of their creed (*f*). It is virtually aſſerted in the very books themſelves: "Moſes wrote all the words of the Lord; "and took the book of the covenant, and "read in the audience of the people (*g*)." Again, near the cloſe of the book of Deuteronomy which, it muſt be remembered, was in ſubſtance a recapitulation of the preceding books, it is ſaid that, "when Moſes "had made an end of writing the words of "this law in a book, until they were "finiſhed, Moſes commanded the Levites, "which bare the ark of the covenant of the "Lord, ſaying: Take this book of the law, "and put it in the ſide of the ark of the "covenant of the Lord your God, that it

(*f*) See Biſhop Watſon's Apology for the Bible, p. 45, 46. (*g*) Exod. xxiv. 47.

"may

"may be there for a witneſs againſt thee (*h*)." In the book of Joſhua, in both the books of Kings, in the ſecond book of Chronicles, in the books of Ezra, of Daniel, and of Malachi, the writing of the law is unequivocally aſcribed to Moſes (*i*). And let it be obſerved that if we for the preſent admit, what will ſhortly be demonſtrated, the inſpiration of theſe ſeveral books of Scripture; the paſſages to which I have juſt referred are ſo many diſtinct and irrefragable teſtimonies to the inſpiration of the books of Moſes. The ſame remark may be extended to the firſt book of Chronicles, the book of Pſalms, of Iſaiah, and of Jeremiah; in all of which the Divine miſſion of Moſes is atteſted (*k*). Let us proceed to the evidence which the New Teſtament preſents concerning Moſes. Jeſus Chriſt expreſsly affirms that Moſes gave the law to the

(*h*) Deut. xxxi. 24—26. (*i*) Joſhua, viii. 34, 35. xiv. 10, &c. 1 Kings, ii. 3. 2 Kings, xxiii. 25. 2 Chron. xxiii. 18. xxx. 16. Ezra, iii. 2. Dan. ix. 11—13. Malachi, iv. 4. (*k*) 1 Chron. xxiii. 14. Pſalm ciii. 7. cv. 26. Iſaiah, lxiii. 12. Jerem. xv. 1.

Jews (*l*). He continually refers to that law; ſpeaks of it with the higheſt reverence; appeals to it as containing deciſive predictions concerning himſelf; affirms that had his hearers believed Moſes, they would have believed himſelf; and that they who would not believe Moſes and the prophets, would not be perſuaded, though one ſhould be raiſed from the dead purpoſely to convert them (*m*). After the aſcenſion of Chriſt, his apoſtles add their teſtimony in the cleareſt language to the fact, that the law was written by Moſes, and written under the guidance of inſpiration (*n*). And each of the five books is ſeparately quoted, or referred to by Chriſt himſelf in the Goſpels; and by the ſacred writers in the

(*l*) John, vii. 19. See alſo i. 17.

(*m*) Matt. v. 17, 18. vii. 12. xxiii. 2. Mark, x. 3. Luke, xvi. 29. 31. xx. 37. xxiv. 27. John, iii. 14. v. 46. Theſe are by no means all the teſtimonies, which the Goſpels bear to the authority and inſpiration of the Moſaic writings.

(*n*) See among many other paſſages, Acts, iii. 22. vii. 35—37. xiii. 39. xxvi. 22. xxviii. 23. Rom. x. 5. 1 Cor. x. ii. 2 Cor. iii. 7—15. Heb. iii. 2. vii. 14. x. 28. Rev. xv. 3.

ſubſequent

ſubſequent parts of the New Teſtament (*o*). In recounting the atteſtations by which the Jewiſh lawgiver is thus honourably diſtinguiſhed, it muſt not be forgotten, that when our Lord was transfigured on the mount, Moſes was one of the two prophets who were commiſſioned to appear to him in glory (*p*).

Ante-

(*o*) Of theſe quotations and references which are extremely numerous, many are ſpecified under the proper heads in Gray's Key to the Old Teſtament; a work which will be found highly uſeful to all who are ſolicitous to attain an accurate knowledge of the ſeveral parts of their Bible.

(*p*) Luke, ix. 30, 31. After the numerous and deciſive proofs of the Divine commiſſion of Moſes, which have been produced from the Old and New Teſtaments; it would be almoſt ſuperfluous to mention the early Heathen writers, who concur in aſcribing the Jewiſh law to Moſes. But it is not unimportant to add, that in diſtant regions of the world, among the Egyptians, the Phenicians, the Greeks, the Hindoos, traditions and practices have prevailed; which, however loaded and debaſed with fable and ſuperſtition, are yet capable of being traced, as Grotius and other writers have ſhewn, to Patriarchal or Moſaical inſtitutions. It is remarkable too, as Biſhop Watſon pointedly obſerves, that the books which come neareſt to the book of Geneſis in age, "are thoſe which "make either the moſt diſtinct mention of, or the moſt "evident alluſion to, the facts related in Geneſis con-

Antecedently to any particular obſervations on the hiſtorical books of the old Teſtament, Joſhua, Judges, Ruth, the two books of Samuel, of Kings, and of Chronicles, together with the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Eſther; ſome general remarks may fitly be premiſed. After the death of Moſes, hiſtorical accounts of the tranſactions of the Jews appear from the Scriptures to have been compoſed by perſons profeſſedly favoured with aſſiſtance from above, and commonly bearing the prophetic character. That Joſhua was appointed by the Supreme Being to govern and inſtruct the Iſraelites is manifeſt. Samuel was alſo a prophet or ſeer (*q*): and his employment as an hiſtorian, and that of other ſeers, is expreſsly ſtated in the firſt book of Chronicles; "Now the acts

"cerning the formation of the world from a chaotic "maſs; the primeval innocence and ſubſequent fall of "man; the longevity of mankind in the firſt ages of the "world; the depravity of the antediluvians, and the de-"ſtruction of the world." Apology for the Bible, p. 75.

(*q*) That "ſeer" and "prophet" were terms of the ſame import is expreſsly affirmed in 1 Sam. ix. 9.

" of David the king, firſt and laſt, behold
" they are written in the book of Samuel
" the ſeer, and in the book of Nathan the
" prophet, and in the book of Gad the
" ſeer (*r*)." Again, when the acts of Solomon are mentioned, it is ſaid, " are they
" not written, firſt and laſt, in the book
" of Nathan the prophet, and in the pro-
" phecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in
" the viſions of Iddo the ſeer againſt Jero-
" boam the ſon of Nebat (*s*)?" The acts of Rehoboam, firſt and laſt, are afterwards affirmed to be written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the ſeer, concerning genealogies (*t*). The acts of Abijah, the ſon of Rehoboam, and his ways, and his ſayings were alſo written in the ſtory of the prophet Iddo (*u*). So likewiſe the acts of Jehoſhaphat, firſt and laſt, are ſaid to be written in the book of Jehu, the ſon of Hanani (*v*); which Jehu is proved by another paſſage in Scripture (*w*)

(*r*) 1 Chron. xxix. 29. (*s*) 2 Chron. ix. 29.
(*t*) 2 Chron. xii. 15. (*u*) 2 Chron. xiii. 22.
(*v*) 2 Chron. xx. 34. (*w*) 1 Kings, xvi. 1.

to have been a prophet. The acts of Uzziah, first and last, and also the acts of Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah is said to have written; and many of the actions of Manasseh are said to be "written among the "sayings of the seers (*x*)." These examples warrant the conclusion, that the transactions of the other reigns, though the writers are not specifically named, were inserted into "the books of the Chronicles "of the kings of Israel and of Judah;" those larger records, to which reference is so frequently made in the two books of the Old Testament now bearing the same name; and also in the books of Kings, by persons invested with the prophetical character. After the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, their history was continued by Ezra and Nehemiah. Though it is not expressly asserted in the Scriptures that these two holy men were prophets (*y*); yet we may be well assured that, if they had not been confessedly under the guid-

(*x*) 2 Chron. xxvi. 22. xxxii. 32. xxxiii. 19.

(*y*) Nehemiah however professes to act under the immediate guidance of God. Nehem. ii. 8. 18.

ance

ance of inſpiration, their writings would not have been added by the Jews to the inſpired books of the ſacred volume; nor included by our Saviour, as will ſpeedily appear to have been the caſe, among the canonical books of the Old Teſtament.

The book of Joſhua may owe its name either to the ſubject of which it treats, the eſtabliſhment of the Iſraelites in the promiſed land by Joſhua, with an account of whoſe death the narrative terminates; or to its having been actually written by Joſhua himſelf, with the exception of the five concluding verſes of the book, and perhaps of ſome other verſes (z), which may have been inſerted for the purpoſe of elucidation by one of the ſubſequent inſpired writers, or by Ezra, when he collated the canon of Scripture. The opinion, however,

(z) Joſh. xix. 47, 48. The remark may alſo apply to xv. 13—19.—if the ſame expedition when mentioned in Judges, xi. 11. be not there mentioned, according to the manner in which ſome think the Hebrew words ſhould be tranſlated, as the recapitulation of events which had taken place during the life of Joſhua.

that

that the book was written by Joſhua reſts on much ſtronger grounds than the other. It is ſupported by the accordant ſentiments of the earlieſt Jewiſh commentators; by the paſſages in the book itſelf, which indicate that it was compoſed by a perſon cotemporary with the events which he deſcribes (*a*): and by a paſſage near the cloſe of the book, which proves that Joſhua himſelf wrote at leaſt a part of its contents, and probably therefore the whole, with the exceptions mentioned above, "in the Book of the Law of God (*b*);" the volume which Moſes had depoſited by the ſide of the ark. The predictions of Joſhua concerning the rebuilding of Jericho are denominated in the firſt book of Kings "the words of "God (*c*)." And the book of Joſhua is repeatedly noticed, either in the way of

(*a*) The author repreſents himſelf as one of thoſe who had paſſed through the river Jordan, when divided before the Iſraelites,—v. 1.—and ſpeaks of Rahab, who hid the ſpies at Jericho, as ſtill alive.—vi. 25.

(*b*) xxiv. 26. (*c*) 1 Kings, xvi. 34. See alſo Joſh. vi. 26.

quotation

quotation or of reference, in the New Teſtament as well as in the Jewiſh Scriptures (*d*).

The book of Judges, compriſing the hiſtory of the Iſraelites during rather more than three hundred years; a period in which their native governors were diſtinguiſhed by the title of Judges; has been aſcribed to different authors. It is attributed with the greateſt probability to Samuel: as he was the laſt of the Judges; as he is known to have written a ſubſequent part of the Jewiſh hiſtory; and as a compariſon of ſome paſſages in the book itſelf ſhews it to have been written in his time. Some of theſe paſſages, ſtating that the events which they relate happened "in thoſe days, when "there was no king in Iſrael (*e*)," imply that the book was written when there was a king, namely after the acceſſion of Saul: while another paſſage (*f*), which deſcribes the Jebuſites to be ſtill dwelling in Jeru-

(*d*) As 1 Chron. ii. 7. xii. 15. Iſaiah, xxviii. 21. Acts, vii. 45. Heb. xi. 30, 31. xiii. 5. James, ii. 25.
(*e*) Judges, xvii. 6. xviii. 1. xix. 1. xxi. 25.
(*f*) i. 21.

ſalem,

ſalem, proves it to have been compoſed before David aſcended the throne of Iſrael; ſince immediately after that event he expelled them (*g*). Quotations are taken from this book, or references made to it, in both Teſtaments (*h*).

The book of Ruth, which records with much affecting ſimplicity the ſhort hiſtory of a Moabitiſh woman, who became a proſelyte to the Jewiſh faith, and was an anceſtor of David, belongs alſo to the times of the Judges (*i*). The writer is not certainly known; but is generally ſuppoſed by Jews as well as Chriſtians to have been Samuel. It was evidently not written until after the birth of David (*k*); nor, probably, until David was rendered an object of general attention by being anointed king. A principal purpoſe of the writer is to ſhew that David, in conformity with the prophecy reſpecting the Meſſiah who was to ſpring from him, was regularly deſcended

(*g*) 2 Sam. v. (*h*) As 1 Sam. xii. 9. 11. 2 Sam. xi. 21. Iſaiah, ix 4. x. 26. Heb. xi. 32.
(*i*) Ruth, i. 1. (*k*) iv. 22.

from Judah. The genealogy is confirmed, with a direct alluſion to Ruth, by Saint Matthew (*l*).

The two books of Samuel carry on the hiſtory of the Iſraelites, during a period of about one hundred and fifty years, from the birth of Samuel to the cloſe of the reign of David. As Samuel is expreſsly declared in a paſſage already quoted from the firſt book of Chronicles (*m*) to have recorded together with Nathan and Gad the actions of David: there appears no improbability in the opinion maintained by the early Jewiſh commentators, and adopted by many learned Chriſtians, that Samuel compoſed the firſt twenty-four chapters of the firſt book (*n*): and that Nathan and Gad were the inſpired writers, who continued his work. Several very noble prophecies are contained in theſe books. Our Saviour refers pointedly to the firſt book (*o*), when

(*l*) Mat. i. 3. 6. (*m*) 1 Chron. xxix. 29.
(*n*) His death is related in the beginning of xxv.
(*o*) Mat. xii. 3, 4.

vindicating

vindicating on a particular occaſion the conduct of his diſciples: and it is to be obſerved, that in the Hebrew canon the two books were conſidered as forming but one. The latter portion however, now called the ſecond book, is not unnoticed in the New Teſtament (*p*).

The two books of Kings, which form only one book in the Hebrew canon, continue the hiſtory during nearly an hundred and thirty years to the Babylonian captivity. The author of them is not aſcertained. The uniformity of the ſtyle and manner throughout both of them affords a preſumptive argument that the whole was arranged by one perſon. And the prevailing opinion is, that they were compiled and abridged by Ezra, or ſome other inſpired perſon, from the larger accounts of the acts of the kings of Iſrael and Judah, which have been already mentioned as written by Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, and other ſucceeding prophets. To theſe, or ſimilar,

(*p*) Heb. i. 5.

records

records frequent reference is made (*q*). In theſe books many ſtriking predictions are contained. Each of theſe books is authoritatively cited by our Saviour (*r*): and the firſt book is afterwards quoted and referred to by his apoſtles (*s*).

The two books of Chronicles, originally regarded as one by the Jews, recapitulate the Jewiſh hiſtory from the reign of Saul to the Babylonian captivity: confirming by their agreement the hiſtorical books of Scripture already noticed; and adding various genealogical tables and other particulars either not ſtated in thoſe books, or leſs copiouſly detailed. They are ſuppoſed to have been compiled from the records ſpecified in the preceding paragraph; and probably by Ezra. This account of the manner in which the books of Chronicles, and alſo of Kings, were compoſed, is confirmed by an obſervation which has been

(*q*) 1 Kings, xi. 41. xiv. 29. and in various other places.
(*r*) Mat. xii. 42. Luke, iv. 25—27.
(*s*) Romans, xi. 2—4. James, v. 17, 18.

made

made by perſons, who have ſtudied them with accuracy: namely, that ſome of the expreſſions contained in them are thoſe of cotemporary deſcription; while others denote that the writer is recording tranſactions which had long taken place. The books of Chronicles were compiled after the captivity; as they mention the reſtoration of the Jews under Cyrus (*t*). They contain occaſional predictions. And the firſt book, and conſequently the ſecond, which in the days of our Saviour was a part of it, received undoubted ſanction by being quoted in the New Teſtament (*u*).

The book of Ezra, ſo denominated from the name of its author, takes up the Jewiſh hiſtory from the ſecond book of Chronicles, with a repetition of the two laſt verſes of which this continuation opens; and relates the tranſactions of nearly eighty years. Part of the work, namely from the eighth verſe of the fourth chapter to the twenty-

(*t*) 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23. (*u*) Mat. i. Luke, iii. See alſo Heb. i. 5. and compare 1 Chron. xxix. 10, 11. with Mat. vi. 13. and Rev. v. 12, 13.

ſeventh

ſeventh verſe of the ſeventh chapter, is compoſed in the Chaldee tongue; probably from a deſire in the hiſtorian to recite with accurate fidelity the public letters, diſcourſes and decrees there mentioned, which were framed originally in that language. Of Ezra himſelf I have already had ſuch repeated occaſion to take incidental notice, that much needs not to be added. He was deſcended from Aaron, and ſucceeded Zerubbabel in the government of Judæa; which he held about ten or twelve years. We afterwards find him heartily co-operating in the pious labours of his ſucceſſor Nehemiah (*v*).

The book of Nehemiah is a continuation of Ezra's hiſtory during thirty-ſix additional years; and on that account, though confeſſedly written by the former, was ſubjoined in the Hebrew canon to the work of the latter. With Nehemiah the Sacred hiſtory terminates, about four hundred and nine years before the Chriſtian era. There

(*v*) Nehem. viii. *v*. 6.

is ſome authority for the opinion of the Jewiſh writers, that he aſſiſted Ezra in collecting the canonical Scriptures (*w*). I do not know that there is any particular and ſeparate reference in the New Teſtament to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, or to the book of Eſther. Their title, however, to a place among the inſpired writings will be eſtabliſhed by the teſtimonies yet to be produced of our Saviour and his apoſtles to the whole collective body of the Jewiſh Scriptures, of which theſe three books indiſputably formed a part.

The book of Eſther relates the hiſtory of a Jewiſh captive, who became the wife of Ahaſuerus, king of Perſia, and the inſtrument in the hands of the Supreme Being by which a ſignal deliverance was wrought for her countrymen. Ezra, among others, has been accounted the author of the book: but on that ſubject nothing is certainly known. It has alſo been

(*w*) 2 Maccab. ii. 13.

a queſ-

a queſtion, which of the Perſian monarchs is intended by the denomination Ahaſuerus. The opinion, however, of the Jewiſh hiſtorian Joſephus, who affirms Artaxerxes Longimanus to be the perſon, is deemed to reſt on the moſt ſolid foundations: and conſequently the events related took place about four hundred and fifty years before Chriſt. The fidelity of the narrative is atteſted by the annual ſolemnity, with which the Jews after their return from the captivity continued to celebrate the feſtival of Purim; a feaſt inſtituted (*x*) in conſequence of the deliverance which they experienced through the interceſſion of Eſther. It is obſerved by the Jews to this day.

From the examination of the hiſtorical books we may proceed to conſider the remaining canonical books of the Old Teſtament, according to the order in which they ſtand in the Bible.

(*x*) Eſther, iii. 7. and ix. 22. 28. It is alſo called among the Jews the feaſt of Haman and Mordecai.

The book of Job has been aſcribed to various authors. The ſubject alſo has been ſometimes regarded as a poetical fiction, ſometimes as an allegory, rather than as a real hiſtory. The reality, however, of the hiſtory, though the ſtyle be poetical, is confirmed not only by the uniform teſtimony of eaſtern tradition; but by the prophecies of Ezekiel, in which the Deity repeatedly (*y*) mentions Job, as a man of extraordinary righteouſneſs, in conjunction with Daniel and Noah; and by the reference made by St. James (*z*) to the patience of Job and to its reward, as an example and encouragement to ſuffering Chriſtians. The land of Uz, where Job reſided, is ſuppoſed, with much probability, to have been in Edom: though by ſome writers it is placed in Arabia Deſerta. From the longevity of Job, and from his ſilence reſpecting the Moſaic

(*y*) Ezek. xiv. 14. 16. 18. 20.

(*z*) James, v. 11. "Ye have heard of the patience of "Job; and *have ſeen the end* of the Lord, that the Lord "is very pitiful and of tender mercy." A form of expreſſion very unlikely to be applied to a fictitious character, or to fictitious events.

diſpenſa-

diſpenſation, he is thought to have lived during the period when the Iſraelites were in bondage in Egypt. The ſtyle of the work, and the cuſtoms incidentally deſcribed in it, bear the marks of patriarchal antiquity. And it appears to have been compoſed either by Job himſelf, or from cotemporary memorials committed to writing by himſelf or his friends. The book of Job contains moſt ſublime deſcriptions of the power and other attributes of God; and is expreſsly cited by St. Paul as ſacred Scripture (*a*).

Of the Pſalms the principal part was compoſed by David; and his name has been in conſequence affixed to the book. They are a collection of Sacred hymns written on various occaſions and under various circumſtances. Some of them were prepared for particular ſolemnities in the Jewiſh worſhip: others appear to have been deſigned generally to celebrate the glorious perfections of God: and others to have

(*a*) 1 Cor. iii. 19.

been drawn from the Pſalmiſt by the ſituations of joy or of ſorrow, in which he was ſucceſſively involved. Hence they abound in ſentiments of the pureſt devotion; in grand and animated deſcriptions of the works of the Almighty, and of his dealings with men; and in the warmeſt effuſions of prayer and praiſe, of gratitude and thankſgiving, of humble contrition, and of pious hope. They abound alſo in the moſt impreſſive and conſoling predictions. One greater than David is continually preſenting himſelf, even Chriſt the Redeemer. Divine inſpiration ſo guided the Pſalmiſt, that in many inſtances his words, at the ſame time that they referred with ſufficient preciſion to the circumſtances of his own life, prefigured in terms the moſt accurate and the moſt ſublime the humiliation, the ſufferings, the triumphant reſurrection, and the eternal kingdom of the Meſſiah. The book of Pſalms is continually cited as of inſpired authority by our Saviour and his Apoſtles; and the prophetic im-

port

port of many ſeparate paſſages illuſtrated and explained (*b*).

The book of Proverbs, which were compoſed by Solomon according to the declarations at the commencement and in a ſubſequent part of the work (*c*), conſiſts partly of maxims of religious inſtruction, partly of leſſons of prudence and diſcretion, drawn up, conformably to the cuſtom of the eaſt, in a pointed and ſententious form. The inſpiration of Solomon is manifeſt from the accounts concerning him, which are ſupplied by the books of Kings and Chronicles. Learned men have ſhewn that this book has furniſhed many heathen authors with their brighteſt ſentiments. It is imitated, in thought and expreſſion, by ſeveral of the Sacred writers who ſucceeded

(*b*) The Sacred writers have fixed the ſenſe, by their citations, of nearly fifty diſtinct Pſalms. The titles prefixed in our Bible to the ſeveral Pſalms are often of conjectural authority; and ſometimes indicate not the compoſer of the Pſalm, but the perſon appointed to ſet it to muſic.

(*c*) Prov. i. 1. xxv. 1.

Solomon: and is cited in various parts of the New Teſtament (*d*).

The book of Eccleſiaſtes is another of the compoſitions of Solomon (*e*); and is commonly ſuppoſed to have been written towards the cloſe of his life, when diſtreſs and anguiſh had reclaimed him from idolatry. Its object is to convince men, by an examination of particulars, that every earthly poſſeſſion is vain in its nature, and neceſſarily accompanied with anxiety: and thence to lead them piouſly to fix their hearts on that ſtate, in which there will be no vanity nor vexation of ſpirit. In the courſe of his argument the writer ſometimes produces, without previous notice, the abſurd ſayings and tenets of ſuppoſed objectors for the purpoſe of refuting them. From a want of attention to this circumſtance we occaſionally hear at the preſent day poſitions aſſerted on the authority of Solomon,

(*d*) See Luke, xiv. 10. Rom. xii. 16, 17. 20. 1 Pet. iv. 8. v. 5. James, iv. 6.

(*e*) Eccl. i. 1.

which

which he quoted only to condemn. The concluſion of the work is worthy of any inſpired author: "Fear God, and keep "his commandments; for this is the whole "duty of man. For God ſhall bring every "work into judgement, with every ſecret "thing, whether it be good or whether "it be evil (*f*)."

The book called the Song of Solomon, from the name of its author, is generally allowed to have been compoſed by him as a nuptial poem, on his marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. Solomon is related to have written above a thouſand ſongs or poems (*g*); of which this alone (with the exception, perhaps, of ſome few of the Pſalms which may have been his productions) was admitted into the canon of the Jewiſh Scriptures. This ſingle circumſtance appears to intimate that under the allegorical veil of nuptial emblems a higher meaning was concealed: and the opinion ſeems con-

(*f*) Eccl. xii. 13, 14. compare 2 Cor. v. 10.
(*g*) 1 Kings, iv. 32.

firmed

firmed by various paſſages in the work not eaſily admitting a literal interpretation. Moſt commentators, therefore, have concluded that, in ſhadowing out things divine by earthly figures, this book has a typical reference to the then future connection between Chriſt and the Chriſtian church: a connection which in the Pſalms, and alſo in the New Teſtament, is repreſented, in accommodation to human ideas, under the figurative alluſion of the cloſeſt and moſt affectionate of all human connections, that of marriage (*b*).

The remaining canonical books of the Old Teſtament are confeſſedly the works of the ſeveral prophets, whoſe names they reſpectively bear. To declare to the Jews the impending judgements of God for idolatry and other ſins; to comfort that people,

(*b*) Pſalm xlv. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Epheſ. v. 25—32. Rev. xix. 7, 8. xxi. 9. xxii. 17. The covenant between God and the Jewiſh church is very frequently denoted in the prophets by emblems borrowed from marriage. See Iſaiah, liv. 5. lxii. 5. Ezek. xvi. &c. Hoſea, ii. 16. and various other paſſages in the Old Teſtament.

when

when in affliction and captivity, with promiſes of deliverance; and to denounce againſt their oppreſſors the retributive puniſhments merited by their cruelty and rapine, were among the ſpecial objects of the prophetical commiſſion. But the moſt noble and important office of prophetic inſpiration was to bear teſtimony to the Meſſiah; to predict his coming, the circumſtances of his birth, of his life, and of his ſufferings; his victory over death and the grave, and the powers of darkneſs; the diffuſion of his religion over the face of the earth; the final reſtoration of the twelve tribes of Iſrael to their own land in the faith of the Saviour whom they pierced; and the complete union of Jews and Gentiles, of all countries, tongues, and nations, into one fold under one ſhepherd. That the prophets were divinely inſpired, the ſpeedy accompliſhment of many of their predictions atteſted to their own cotemporaries. To us, who live after the lapſe of numerous ages, in which ſo many additional predictions have been verified; who know that

the

the great Redeemer has ſuffered and performed what they only foretold; who ſee at this moment the predictions delivered by Moſes, the earlieſt of the prophets, nearly four thouſand years ago, verifying in every quarter of the world in the fate of the Jews "ſcattered among all people from one end "of the earth to the other, an aſtoniſh-"ment, and a proverb, and a byeword "among all nations:" to us the kind of evidence, which was beſtowed on the cotemporaries of the prophets in a degree ſufficiently convincing, comes with an accumulation of force irreſiſtible to every thing but ignorance or obduracy. To this evidence the New Teſtament adds its fulleſt atteſtation. The proofs which it ſupplies of the inſpiration of the ſeparate books of prophecy will be noticed in the ſhort account of each book about to be given. But in this place it is proper to mention ſome of the many teſtimonies which are afforded to the writings of the prophets taken collectively. "Prophecy came not "in old time by the will of man; but holy

"men

" men of God ſpake as they were moved " by the Holy Ghoſt (*h*)."—" God, at ſun- " dry times and in divers manners, ſpake " in time paſt unto the fathers by the pro- " phets (*i*)."—" If they hear not Moſes " and the prophets; neither would they " be perſuaded, though one roſe from the " dead (*k*)."—" Beginning at Moſes, and " all the prophets, he (Chriſt) expounded " unto them in all the Scriptures the things " concerning himſelf (*l*)."

Iſaiah propheſied, as we learn from himſelf (*m*), in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. He probably did not enter upon his office until towards the cloſe of Uzziah's reign, about ſeven hundred and fifty-eight years before Chriſt; and he was certainly living about forty-five years afterwards, in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah (*n*). His work, with the exception of ſome

(*h*) 2 Pet. xxi. 21. (*i*) Heb. i. 1.
(*k*) Luke, xvi. 31. (*l*) Luke, xxiv. 27.
(*m*) Iſaiah, i. 1. (*n*) 2 Kings, xx. 1.

hiſtorical

hiſtorical parts contained in it, is compſed, according to the general cuſtom of the Hebrew prophets (*o*), in metre. It is characterized by grandeur of conception and elevation of ſtyle; and abounds in paſſages of the ſublimeſt poetry. The predictions of Iſaiah were addreſſed principally to the kingdom of Judah; though he occaſionally adverts to the ten tribes. He proclaims the impending deſtruction of the Aſſyrian empire; the utter and perpetual deſolation of Babylon; and the ſubverſion of the Philiſtines, Syrians, Egyptians, and other ſurrounding nations. And in his predictions concerning the Meſſiah and the final glories of the Chriſtian church he expatiates with ſuch accuracy and ſuch magnificence of deſcription, that he has been emphatically denominated the evangelical prophet. His

(*o*) On the ſubject of Hebrew poetry, and the diſcriminating excellences of the ſeveral Hebrew poets, conſult Biſhop Lowth's admirable Prelections on Hebrew Poetry, his preliminary diſcourſe to his new Tranſlation of Iſaiah, and Archbiſhop Newcome's Tranſlation of the minor Prophets.

book

book is quoted with high diſtinction by Chriſt and the apoſtles (*p*).

Jeremiah was called to the prophetic miniſtry ſix hundred and twenty-eight years before the Chriſtian era, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Joſiah king of Judah; and continued in the exerciſe of it during rather more than forty years, until the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by Nebuchadnezzar (*q*). In his writings, which are diſtinguiſhed for preciſion and energy, and for their peculiar pathos; the Babylonian captivity, the time of its continuance, the reſtoration of the Jews, the deſtruction of Babylon and of ſome other nations, and many circumſtances reſpecting the birth and office of the Meſſiah, are prominent features. He is ſpecifically mentioned and quoted in the New Teſtament (*r*).

(*p*) As in Matt. iv. 14. viii. 17. xii. 17. xiii. 14, Mark, vii. 6. Luke, iii. 4. iv. 17. John, xii. 39. 41. Acts, viii. 28. xxviii. 25. Romans, ix. 27. x. 16. 20, &c.

(*q*) Jerem. i. 1—3. (*r*) Matt. ii. 17, 18. xvi. 14.

Ezekiel propheſied in Meſopotamia, on the banks of the river Chebar, where he had been placed with many of his captive countrymen by the Chaldeans (*s*). His propheeies, the chief portion of which is not written in poetical meaſure, are remarkable for indignant vehemence of ſtyle. They are darkened by myſterious viſions; and contain many things yet to be accompliſhed. Of ſome parts, however, as of the deſtruction of the Ammonites, Moabites, Philiſtines, and other countries by Nebuchadnezzar, the accompliſhment was ſpeedy: and to the irrecoverable deſolation of Tyre, according to his predictions, many revolving ages have borne witneſs. Saint John in the book of Revelations appears to allude in a pointed manner to Ezekiel (*t*).

Daniel, who was of the royal houſe of Judah, was carried captive ſix hundred and ſix years before Chriſt, with Jehoiachim from Jeruſalem by Nebuchadnezzar; and

(*s*) Ezek. i. 1—3. (*t*) Compare Rev. xix. 17. to the end, and xx. 8, 9 with Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. to 20.

was

was advanced by that monarch and his ſucceſſors, in conſequence of Divine inſpiration ſignally beſtowed upon him, to the higheſt offices in the Babylonian empire. Amid the enſnaring allurements of his exalted condition, he exhibited for the inſtruction of future ages, and of ſtateſmen in particular, a glorious example of active and unſhaken piety; and of ſtedfaſt obedience to the commandments of God, in defiance of all perſonal hazard, and of the crooked ſuggeſtions of worldly wiſdom. He lived to ſee his countrymen return, on the acceſſion of Cyrus, to their native land: but being then nearly ninety years of age, he probably remained in Babylon. His predictions, which are written in proſe, relate principally to the four great empires which ſucceeded each other, the Aſſyrian, the Perſian, the Grecian, and the Roman; the preciſe time of the coming of Chriſt; the riſe and duration of Antichriſt; the final triumph and univerſal prevalence of the Chriſtian religion. Many of his prophecies have been fulfilled with ſuch manifeſt

preciſion, that ſome ſceptical writers, with boldneſs equalled only by their folly, have aſſerted, in the face of demonſtrative evidence to the contrary, that the predictions were written ſubſequently to the events which they deſcribe. To the celebrated wiſdom of Daniel a memorable teſtimony is given by the cotemporary prophet Ezekiel (*u*); in whoſe predictions alſo the Supreme Being himſelf declares Daniel's extraordinary righteouſneſs (*v*). To theſe evidences is to be added the unequivocal atteſtation of our Saviour (*w*).

Hoſea was coëval with Iſaiah (*x*). His prophecies, which are couched in a ſtyle ſententious and abrupt, and are attended with conſiderable obſcurity, were addreſſed in part to Judah, but principally to Iſrael. Together with predictions relating to thoſe kingdoms, he intermingles others reſpecting

(*u*) Ezekiel, xxviii. 3. (*v*) Ezek. xiv. 14. 18. 20.
(*w*) Matt. xxiv. 15. Mark, xiii. 14.
(*x*) See Hoſ. i. 1. and Iſaiah, i. 1.

the

the Meſſiah. His book has the expreſs ſanction of the New Teſtament (*y*).

Joel was probably cotemporary with Hoſea: but the exact time in which he lived is not aſcertained. His prophecies, which are animated with the moſt poetical deſcriptions, were addreſſed to the kingdom of Judah; and foretel, together with the invaſion of the land of Judah by the Chaldeans, and the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans, the glories of the Chriſtian diſpenſation. He is cited by the evangelical writers (*z*).

Amos alſo lived during the earlier part of Hoſea's miniſtry (*a*). His compoſitions, which are replete with boldneſs as well as elegance, chiefly relate to Iſrael; though he occaſionally menaces Judah, and other contiguous nations, with Divine judgments. The happy reign of the Meſſiah is alſo an-

(*y*) Matt. ii. 15. ix. 13. xii. 7. Romans, ix. 25, 26.
(*z*) Acts, ii. 16. Romans, x. 13. (*a*) Amos, i. 1.

nounced. Amos is twice quoted by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apoſtles (*b*).

The period in which Obadiah delivered his ſhort prophecy, conſiſting of denunciations againſt the Edomites, and promiſes of future reſtoration to the Jews, is not known: but is aſſigned with probability to the early part of the Babylonian captivity. There is much beauty in his language. I do not know that a diſtinct and ſpecial reference to this ſingle chapter has been obſerved in the New Teſtament.

The book of Jonah relates the prophetic commiſſion given to him againſt Nineveh; his refuſal to undertake it, his puniſhment, and deliverance; the repentance of the Ninevites; the mortification of Jonah at having been charged with prophetic threatenings, the accompliſhment of which was thus averted (*c*): and the condeſcending

(*b*) Acts, vii. 42, 43. xv. 15. 17.

(*c*) It is apparent from iv. 2. that the dread of experiencing ſuch a mortification was the cauſe of his original reluctance to be the meſſenger employed.

expoſtula-

expoſtulations of the Supreme Being with the angry prophet. Jonah appears to have lived in the reign of Jeroboam, the ſecond of the name who was king of Iſrael, above eight hundred years before Chriſt (*d*). His language is generally that of ſimple narrative. According to the typical nature of the Jewiſh diſpenſation, the miracle by which Jonah was puniſhed was appointed to prefigure the time of the continuance of Chriſt in the grave: and is thus applied by Chriſt himſelf (*e*).

Micah lived juſt before the deſtruction of Samaria (*f*), and propheſied both againſt Iſrael and againſt Judah. Together with the captivity of thoſe kingdoms, and the deſtruction of their Aſſyrian oppreſſors; he foretold the birth-place of the Meſſiah, and the exaltation of his dominion over the whole earth. His language is extremely energetic as well as beautiful. A reference

(*d*) 2 Kings, xiv. 25.
(*e*) Matt. xii. 39—41. xiv. 4. Luke, xi. 29, 30.
(*f*) Micah, i. 1.

to one of his prophecies, when it had been delivered above an hundred years, ſaved the life of Jeremiah (*g*). In the New Teſtament his prophetic character is fully confirmed (*h*).

The time when Nahum lived is doubtful; but from a compariſon of certain paſſages in his book it ſeems probable that he lived in the reign of Hezekiah. His prophecy is a complete and regular poem, in the higheſt degree animated, glowing and ſublime, denouncing the deſtruction of Nineveh. It is not clear that his prophecy is ſpecifically quoted in the New Teſtament (*i*).

Habbakkuk was probably cotemporary with Jeremiah. He predicts the Chaldean invaſion; but he refers to the redemption to be wrought at the appointed time for

(*g*) Jerem. xxvi. 17—24.

(*h*) Matt. ii. 5, 6. John, vii. 42. Compare alſo Matt. x. 35, 36. with Micah, vii. 6.

(*i*) Romans, x. 15. is a reference either to Iſaiah, 52. 7. or to Nahum, i. 15. or to both paſſages.

the

the people of God, when the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, "as the waters cover the ſea." The hymn with which his prophecy concludes is one of the moſt ſublime and impaſſioned compoſitions in the whole compaſs of inſpired poetry. The evangelical writers repeatedly quote the book of Habbakkuk (*k*).

We learn from Zephaniah himſelf (*l*), that he propheſied in the reign of Joſiah king of Judah. He foretells in an impreſſive manner the puniſhment of his idolatrous countrymen, and of ſome of the neighbouring nations, together with the deſtruction of Nineveh: and concludes with conſoling promiſes of the final reſtoration of the Jews under the Goſpel covenant. I am not acquainted with any paſſage in the New Teſtament, in which he is ſpecifically quoted.

(*k*) Acts, xiii. 41. Romans, i. 17. Gal. iii. 2. Heb. x. 37, 38.

(*l*) Zephaniah, i. 1.

The three remaining prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, flouriſhed after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. The two former were alſo cotemporaries; and propheſied during the time when the Jews were rebuilding the city of Jeruſalem. Haggai, in language commonly unornamented, but always impreſſive, and occaſionally ſublime, reproves his countrymen for their eagerneſs to decorate their own habitations inſtead of exerting themſelves in the re-edification of the Temple; excites them in the name of the Almighty to reſtore the ſacred edifice; and ſolemnly aſſures them that this latter houſe ſhould be crowned with glory greater than the glory of the former, and be filled with the preſence of the Meſſiah, the Deſire of all Nations. Haggai is quoted by St. Paul in the epiſtle to the Hebrews (*m*).

Zechariah co-operated with Haggai (*n*) in exhorting the Jews to rebuild their

(*m*) Heb. ii. 26.

(*n*) Ezra deſcribes the effect produced by the propheſying of Haggai and Zechariah, Ezra, v. 1. vi. 14.

Temple.

Temple. Under various emblems and figurative repreſentations he predicts the future proſperity of his countrymen; and their union with the Gentile nations under the bleſſed government of Chriſt. In ſtyle he ſo nearly reſembles Jeremiah, that the Jews have been accuſtomed to ſpeak of the ſpirit of Jeremiah as reſting on him. Some of the concluding chapters of his book appear to differ in ſtyle from the reſt; and a paſſage from one of them is quoted by the evangeliſts (*o*), in the preſent copies of our Bible, as the prophecy of Jeremiah. Zechariah is repeatedly cited in other parts of the New Teſtament (*p*).

(*o*) Matt. xxvii. 9. The word Jeremiah may have been originally inſerted inſtead of Zechariah by the error of a tranſcriber: or, as ſome learned men ſuppoſe, the roll containing theſe concluding chapters may ſometimes have been attached by miſtake to the book of Jeremiah. Either of theſe circumſtances was the more likely to happen, if the Jews were already accuſtomed in the days of Chriſt to ſpeak of the ſpirit of Jeremiah as reſting on Zechariah.

(*p*) Matt. xxi. 4, 5. xxvi. 31. Mark, xiv. 27. John, xii. 15. xix. 37. Rev. i. 7.

Malachi,

Malachi, who appears to have lived about four hundred years before Chriſt (*b*), was the laſt of the Jewiſh prophets. He reprehends both the prieſts and the people for their diſregard of God and his laws: foretells puniſhments to the wicked, and recompence to the righteous; and announces the coming of the Meſſiah, "the "Sun of Righteouſneſs with healing in his "wings;" and of his forerunner John the Baptiſt, to preach repentance in the ſpirit and power of Elijah. He cloſes the ſacred volume with a ſolemn command faithfully to obſerve the law of Moſes until the manifeſtation of the promiſed Redeemer. The writers of the New Teſtament afford the cleareſt atteſtations to the prophetic character of Malachi (*r*).

To

(*q*) He was evidently ſubſequent to Haggai and Zechariah: for he ſpeaks of the Temple as rebuilt and the ſacrifices as performing.

(*r*) Matt. xi. 10—14. xvii. 10—12. Mark, i. 2. ix. 12. Luke, i. 16, 17. vii. 27. xvi. 16. Romans, ix. 13. It is to be obſerved, that the Jews expected Elijah the Tiſhbite

To the particular proofs which have been produced to ſhew the authenticity and inſpiration of the ſeveral books of the Old Teſtament, it remains to ſubjoin the general and deciſive teſtimony given by the inſpired apoſtles of Chriſt, and by Chriſt himſelf, to the whole ſacred volume of the Jews: a teſtimony delivered from an infallible ſource, and accompanied with no exception. In the firſt place let it be duly conſidered, that whenever our Saviour and his diſciples ſpeak of the Scriptures in general, they ſpeak of them with the utmoſt reverence as the word of God: and whenever they appeal to any part of the Scriptures, they make the appeal in a manner which recognizes the authority of the whole. In the next place, let the import of the following evidence be weighed:— "From a child," ſaith St. Paul to his diſ-

bite to be actually reſtored to life, and ſent to prepare the way for the Meſſiah. In that ſenſe John the Baptiſt denied that he was Elias; John, i. 21.

ciple Timothy, "thou haſt known the Holy "Scriptures," (the Jewiſh Scriptures, the only Scriptures exiſting when Timothy was a child,) "which are able to make thee "wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which "is in Chriſt Jeſus. All Scripture is given "by inſpiration of God (*s*)."—"The Scrip-"ture," ſaith our Saviour, "cannot be "broken (*t*)." And at another time; "all "things muſt be fulfilled which were writ-"ten in the law of Moſes, and in the pro-"phets, and in the Pſalms, concerning "me (*u*)." When we recollect that our Saviour thus cites the Scriptures conformably to the three diviſions which contained, according to the diſtribution eſtabliſhed among the Jews, all the books of the Old Teſtament; we ſhall perceive that his ſanction comprehended every portion of the ſacred volume.

That the Scriptures had been preſerved in their primitive integrity to the time of

(*s*) 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. (*t*) John, x. 35.
(*u*) Luke, xxiv. 44.

our Saviour was a part of the original propoſition to be eſtabliſhed. On that head I might with propriety refer to the acknowledged veneration with which the Jews regarded their ſacred books; to the extreme care which is known to have been beſtowed in tranſcribing them; and to the impoſſibility that, when the Scriptures were in the hands of ſuch numbers not only in Judea, but in many other countries, any material corruption could have taken place, either by negligence or deſign, without having been ſpeedily detected. But to enlarge on theſe and other collateral topics is wholly needleſs. The unqualified ſanction which was beſtowed, as has recently been ſhewn, by our Saviour on every part of the Old Teſtament completely proves its purity. Had it been corrupted, he would would not have failed to enumerate, among the crimes with which he charged the Jews, the fraudulent or careleſs deterioration of the written word of God: nor would he have unreſervedly appealed to

the

the Scriptures, or have permitted his inſpired apoſtles thus to appeal to them after his aſcenſion,, as records of Divine and univerſal authority.

But though the Jewiſh Scriptures were pure in the days of our Saviour, have they deſcended in their original integrity through the lapſe of ſeventeen centuries, many of them centuries of ignorance and darkneſs, to the preſent hour? This to a Chriſtian is a very important queſtion. It is a queſtion which demands a concluſive anſwer: and it may receive, in few words, a moſt ſatisfactory reply. In the firſt place, the corruption of them would have been impracticable. For ſince during the whole of the period in queſtion they have been univerſally in the hands both of Jews and of Chriſtians in all parts of the world; and not only peruſed by all parties as a rule of faith, but produced and quoted as criterions of the truth in every religious diſcuſſion: the watchful jealouſy of Jews againſt

againſt Chriſtians, and of contending Chriſtian ſects againſt each other, would immediately have detected any material variation, whether introduced by inadvertence or by deſign. But, in the next place, the integrity of the Scriptures does not reſt on ſpeculative arguments. It is aſcertained by indiſputable facts. We are in poſſeſſion of a Samaritan verſion of the Pentateuch made above two thouſand years ago; which varies from the Hebrew original in very few caſes, and thoſe immaterial, and admitting an obvious explanation. We are in poſſeſſion of a complete Greek verſion of the Old Teſtament, called the Septuagint verſion, from a tradition that once prevailed reſpecting the number of perſons employed in the tranſlation: a verſion, the whole of which was confeſſedly made long before the birth of Chriſt, and thoroughly confirms the accordance of the original Hebrew copies from which it was rendered with thoſe which we now

retain.

retain (*v*). Add to theſe facts, that nearly ſeven hundred Hebrew manuſcripts of the Scriptures diſperſed in various parts of the world have been recently compared with each other by Dr. Kennicott and his aſſiſtants, and a very large additional number by De Roſſi. The reſult of theſe very meritorious labours has demonſtratively proved, that, although many verbal variations have found their way into particular manuſcripts through the erroneous proceedings of tranſcribers; and have thus created in detached paſſages incidental obſcurities, which, by means of theſe collations have been happily removed; the integrity of our Hebrew text is indiſputable.

Concerning the apocryphal books, as they are not of inſpired authority, though unac-

(*v*) The Chaldee paraphraſes, called Targums, of the Old Teſtament, which were made for the benefit of the Jews on their return from the Babylonian captivity, during which great numbers of them had adopted the Chaldee language,

unaccountably received as ſuch, the prayer of Manaſſeh excepted, by the church of Rome, it is not neceſſary to enter into detail (*w*). From the peruſal of them, though human compoſitions, much religious inſtruction may be drawn; particularly from the book of Eccleſiaſticus. And the author of the firſt book of Maccabees exhibits many ſtrong marks of hiſtorical knowledge and fidelity.

The ſtatement of particulars contained in the preſent chapter ſtrongly ſuggeſts the duty of gratitude to God, for having atteſted, by ſo many proofs, the Divine authority of the canonical books of the Old Teſtament, "which are able to make us "wiſe unto ſalvation through faith which

language, a dialect of their native tongue, and could not eaſily underſtand the original Scriptures, (ſee Nehem. viii. 8.) confirms the integrity of our Hebrew text.

(*w*) A particular account of each of theſe books may be found in Gray's Key to the Old Teſtament.

" is in Chriſt Jeſus :" and loudly calls upon us habitually and diligently to apply them, with a pious and humble heart, to the momentous purpoſe for which they have been beſtowed.

CHAP. V.

ON THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

IF the enquiry purſued in the preceding chapter reſpecting the canonical Jewiſh Scriptures be a matter of high importance to Chriſtians; a ſimilar enquiry reſpecting the books of the New Teſtament is of ſtill greater moment. For the Divine authority of the latter books is not only the ground, on which the moſt obvious proofs of the authenticity and inſpiration of the former depend; but is the foundation of the whole fabric of Chriſtian faith.

The moſt perſpicuous method of conducting the preſent inveſtigation will be to ſtate, in the firſt place, the nature and purport of each of the books of the New Teſtament: and, in the ſecond place, to lay before the reader a brief account of the

concurring proofs which demonſtrate that the books, ſingly and collectively, were written by the perſons whoſe names they ſeverally bear, and under the ſuperintending guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.

The writings compriſed in the New Teſtament (*a*) may be divided into three claſſes; hiſtorical, epiſtolary, and prophetical. In all of them doctrinal truths of the

(*a*) The original word, Διαθηκη, ſignifies either a teſtament (that is to ſay, a will) or a covenant. It is expreſsly applied by St. Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 14. with the epithet "Old" to the Jewiſh Scriptures. From this circumſtance, and from the repeated uſe of the term by Chriſt and his diſciples as characteriſtic of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, Matt. xxvi. 28. Hebrews, vii. 22. viii. 8. it has been aſſigned from a very early period of the church to the Chriſtian Scriptures. The term "Covenant" would however have been on the whole a more appropriate tranſlation. The word "Teſtament," in its natural meaning is not very applicable to the Jewiſh canon: but may be aſcribed with pertinence to the collection of the ſacred writings of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts; as implying a book wherein the inheritance of the kingdom of Heaven is bequeathed and ſealed to true Chriſtians, as children and heirs of God, through the death of Jeſus Chriſt, and the death of Jeſus Chriſt as the teſtator is recorded and applied to their full advantage. See Hebrews, ix. 15—17.

utmoſt

utmoſt conſequence are included: and in the hiſtorical and epiſtolary books prophecies are occaſionally delivered. With this explanation the preceding diviſion may be uſefully made. The hiſtorical books are the four Goſpels (*b*) and the Acts of the Apoſtles. The epiſtolary books are thoſe to which the title of Epiſtles is always prefixed. Of the prophetical claſs there is only one book, that of the Apocalypſe (*c*), or Revelations.

The Goſpels contain a recital of ſuch leading particulars relating to the life and diſcourſes of Jeſus Chriſt, as appeared to the writers moſt eſſential to be recorded for the information and benefit of the Chriſtian church. Of theſe Goſpels there are four, written by four different perſons, and according to internal marks, under different circumſtances and at different periods.

(*b*) Goſpel, a word of Saxon etymology, has preciſely the ſame meaning as the Greek word Ευαγγελιον, good tidings.

(*c*) Αποκαλυψις, a revelation.

The Goſpel compoſed by Saint Matthew was confeſſedly written antecedently to any of the other three; though learned enquirers vary in their concluſions as to the preciſe date to be aſſigned to it. Some (*d*) have thought, on no ſlight grounds, that it was not compoſed until A. D. 61. At the ſame time conſiderable weight belongs to the arguments which carry back the date to within ſome few years of the death of our Saviour. The book evidently was compoſed primarily for the uſe of Jewiſh converts. The Chriſtian authors of the ſecond and many following centuries, in ſpeaking of this Goſpel, concur in affirming it to have been originally written in Hebrew. A Greek tranſlation however is acknowledged to have been ſpeedily made; and, in conſequence of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the Jewiſh ſtate ſoon to have been in more general uſe than the original. That every other part of the New Teſtament, the Epiſtle to the Hebrews excepted,

(*d*) See the ſubject diſcuſſed in Biſhop Percy's Key to the New Teſtament; a manual of great utility.

was

was compoſed from the firſt in Greek is a fact univerſally admitted: and the aſſertion of ſome writers, who have maintained that epiſtle, as it ſtands in our Greek Teſtaments, to be only a verſion from the Hebrew, appears not to be ſupported by adequate proof. The Greek language was, in fact, familiar to the Jews long before the time of our Saviour: and was incomparably ſuperior to the Hebrew tongue as a vehicle of inſtruction to Gentile converts and to ſucceeding ages. Saint Matthew, from being a publican, or collector of taxes under the Roman juriſdiction, became one of the twelve apoſtles of Chriſt; and was an eye-witneſs of almoſt all the tranſactions which he relates. It is uncertain in what countries he exerciſed his apoſtolical labours after the aſcenſion of his maſter; and equally uncertain whether thoſe labours were terminated by a natural death or by martyrdom.

The Goſpel of Saint Mark was written by that Mark, whom St. Peter ſignaliſes by the

affectionate appellation of ſon (*e*): probably the ſame perſon with "John ſurnamed "Mark," who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and the epiſtles of St. Paul (*f*). Though not actually an apoſtle himſelf, he was, to ſay the leaſt, a companion and intimate friend of St. Peter. His qualifications therefore to record with knowledge and fidelity the tranſactions related in his Goſpel cannot be doubted. From the care with which in ſeveral inſtances he explains Oriental circumſtances and Jewiſh cuſtoms, it is evident that he compoſed his book with an eſpecial regard to the inſtruction of Gentile converts. And the concurrent voice of antiquity affirms that it was drawn up at Rome for the uſe of the Chriſtians of that part of the world; and was written from the expreſs information of St. Peter, if it were not even penned, as ſome early writers aſſert, under the actual ſuperintendence of that Apoſtle. St. Mark preſerves ſeveral

(*e*) 1 Pet. v. 13.

(*f*) Acts, xii. 12. 25 xv. 39. Col. iv. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. 24.

particulars

particulars reſpecting our Saviour, which St. Matthew had omitted; and paſſes over others recorded by that evangeliſt, as not immediately calculated to make a ſtrong impreſſion on a Heathen diſciple, unaccuſtomed to the ſtudy of the Jewiſh Scriptures. His own impartiality (and, if St. Peter reviſed his Goſpel, the contrite humility of that righteous man) is pointedly ſhewn by his relating fully in detail the failings of St. Peter, and the aggravating circumſtances which attended his denial of Jeſus Chriſt; and by his forbearing to record the conſoling tokens of favour beſtowed on the penitent apoſtle, by his forgiving Lord after his reſurrection. St. Mark afterwards appears to have preached the Goſpel in Egypt; and to have died at Alexandria, probably by a natural death.

Saint Luke, the frequent companion of St. Paul (*g*), profeſſes to have compoſed his

(*g*) See Col. iv. 14. Philemon, 24. and various paſſages in the Acts of the Apoſtles, which prove St. Luke to have been with St. Paul in his travels through many different countries.

Goſpel

Goſpel from the information of eye-witneſſes of the facts which he deſcribes. He is allowed to be the perſon ſtyled by St. Paul "the brother, whoſe praiſe is in the "Goſpel throughout all the churches (*b*)." He records many particulars unnoticed by his predeceſſors: and by his large explanations of Jewiſh uſages ſhews that he wrote at a period, when a great acceſſion of Gentiles had augmented the Chriſtian church. It ſeems probable that he publiſhed his Goſpel in Greece. The place, time, and manner of his death are not aſcertained.

The Goſpel of Saint John, the peculiarly favoured apoſtle of Chriſt, is univerſally admitted to have been compoſed ſubſequently to the other three (*i*). It was written in Aſia, and with an eſpecial deſign to refute certain heretical opinions concerning the nature of Chriſt, with which the ſenſeleſs and irreligious philoſophy of the

(*b*) 2 Cor. viii. 18.

(*i*) Biſhop Percy (in his Key to the New Teſtament, p. 81.) ſeems to demonſtrate that it was written in A. D. 69.

Gnoſtics

Gnoſtics had by that time infected the Chriſtian world. In another reſpect alſo it is particularly intereſting: as by reciting at length ſome moſt impreſſive diſcourſes of our Saviour when in private with his twelve diſciples, it ſeems to render us more familiarly acquainted with his holineſs, with his love for his followers and for mankind, and with all the other virtues of his heart. Saint John, who, according to the teſtimony of antiquity, had peruſed, as indeed we might conclude without any ſpecific evidence, the three preceding Goſpels, confirms them by his tacit aſſent; and confines himſelf chiefly to circumſtances which they had not mentioned, or which, if mentioned by them, furniſhed him with an opportunity of ſubjoining an important addition. Like his predeceſſors, he explains Jewiſh rites and occurrences for the information of his Gentile readers. St. John reſided during the latter part of his life at Epheſus; having the epiſcopal ſuperintendence of that city, and of others

in the neighbouring part of Aſia Minor; and died there in a very advanced age.

The Acts of the Apoſtles were confeſſedly written by St. Luke: and probably ſoon after the expiration of that reſidence of St. Paul at Rome during two years, with an account of which the hiſtory, comprehending a period of about thirty years after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, terminates. After reciting the early augmentation of the Chriſtian church at Jeruſalem in conſequence of the promiſed deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on the apoſtles: and the eſtabliſhment of the right of the Gentiles to all the privileges of the Goſpel covenant, demonſtrated by the miſſion of St. Peter to Cornelius, and its attendant circumſtances; St. Luke reſtricts his narration almoſt excluſively to the labours of St. Paul, whoſe violence againſt the Chriſtians during the perſecution which began with the death of Stephen, together with the miraculous converſion of the enemy into the preacher of Chriſti-

Chriſtianity, he had previouſly recorded. After mentioning the preaching of St. Paul for a year at Antioch in Syria, St. Luke records three diſtinct and very extenſive journeys of the great apoſtle of the Gentiles. The firſt, begun from Antioch, in obedience to the expreſs direction of the Holy Ghoſt, about A. D. 45. and occupying the ſpace of two years, included the Iſle of Cyprus, Pamphylia, Piſidia, and Lycaonia. The ſecond, after an interval in which Paul had been ſent with Barnabas to Jeruſalem to conſult the other apoſtles reſpecting the aſſerted obligation of the Gentile converts to receive the Moſaic law, was undertaken from Antioch alſo about A. D. 50; and comprehended Cilicia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Myſia, Macedonia, Athens, Corinth, in which city he reſided eighteen months, and Epheſus. He reached Antioch after an abſence of three years. After a ſhort ſtay there, he commenced his third journey, the laſt before his impriſonment at Rome; reviſiting Phrygia, Galatia, Epheſus, (in which city he continued during

during two years,) Troas (*j*), Macedonia, Corinth: and returning by the way of Macedonia, Troas, Aſſos, Mitylene, Miletus, whence he ſailed to Tyre, and proceeded to Jeruſalem, and arrived there at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, A. D. 58. St. Luke was his faithful aſſociate in many parts of theſe laborious and dangerous expeditions by ſea and land (*k*).

To the genuineneſs, the authenticity, and the inſpiration of theſe hiſtorical books the Chriſtian writers, who lived at and near the period of their publication, bear deciſive teſtimony. Barnabas, one of the companions of St. Paul (*l*), in a ſingle epiſtle yet remaining, quotes the Goſpel of St. Matthew, and quotes it as ſacred Scripture (*m*).

(*j*) 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

(*k*) Acts, xvi. 11. xx. 5, &c. &c.

(*l*) See Acts, xi. to xv. inclusively.

(*m*) The teſtimonies of the Fathers to the ſeveral books of the New Teſtament are recited at length by Dr. Lardner: and from his work a judicious compendium of the principal atteſtations is given in Dr. Paley's View of the Evidences of Chriſtianity.

Clement

Clement of Rome, another of the companions of the ſame apoſtle (*n*) quotes it with the higheſt reſpect; and alſo the Goſpel of St. Luke. Hermas, inconteſtably a writer of the earlieſt Chriſtian antiquity, and uſually ſuppoſed to be the Hermas mentioned by St. Paul, manifeſtly alludes to the two Goſpels already named, and alſo to that of St. John; and probably to the Acts of the Apoſtles. Ignatius, who became biſhop of Antioch about thirty-ſeven years after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, repeatedly alludes to the Goſpels of Matthew and John. Polycarp, who had converſed with many perſons who had ſeen our Saviour, had himſelf been inſtructed by the Apoſtles, and was by them appointed biſhop of Smyrna, alludes to the Goſpel of St. Matthew and perhaps to that of St. Luke, and certainly to the Acts, in a letter yet extant; which, though very ſhort, contains nearly forty clear alluſions to the books of the New Teſtament, particularly to the writings of St. Paul. Papias, who

(*n*) Phil. iv. 3.

was

was a hearer of St. John, and the companion of Polycarp, ſpeaking of the Goſpels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, mentions them in a manner which ſhews that their genuineneſs was a fact which had long been recogniſed. Let it be obſerved that all the witneſſes already quoted had lived and converſed with ſome of the apoſtles: and that by one or more of them atteſtation is thus given to each of the five hiſtorical books of the New Teſtament. Juſtin Martyr, about twenty years after Papias, quotes all the four Goſpels and the Acts; and refers to them as books of Holy Scripture. Of the writings of Hegeſippus, who lived about thirty years afterwards, ſome fragments are preſerved; and in them he quotes the Goſpel of St. Matthew, and apparently refers to the other Goſpels and the Acts. An epiſtle, of the ſame period, and ſtill extant, addreſſed to the churches of Aſia and Phrygia by the Gallican churches of Vienne and Lyons, whoſe biſhop Pothinus, then ninety years old, had lived in the days of St. John, refers

diſtinctly to the Goſpels of Luke and John, and to the Acts. Irenæus, ſucceſſor of Pothinus and the diſciple of Polycarp, who had been inſtructed by St. John, affirms in the moſt poſitive and diſtinct manner the genuineneſs and the Divine authority of the four Goſpels and of the Acts. If it were neceſſary to continue the line of teſtimony lower, Theophilus biſhop of Antioch, and the cotemporary of Irenæus; Clement of Alexandria, who flouriſhed ſixteen years afterwards, (A. D. 190); Tertullian of Carthage, who followed Clement (A. D. 200); Origen of Alexandria, (A. D. 230), and Euſebius of Cæſarea, (A. D. 315), with numerous intermediate writers of inferior note, might be produced as corroborating in their different countries theſe fundamental truths (o).

(o) It ought to be recollected that all the teſtimonies which have been produced in this paragraph from the days of the apoſtles to Euſebius are independent of each other, as well as that the perſons who thus concur in one conſiſtent account lived in widely ſeparated regions.

The order of the propoſed examination of the books of the New Teſtament now leads us to the Epiſtles. Of theſe Epiſtles, the greater number was addreſſed to particular churches or to particular perſons. Thoſe which are not of that deſcription are denominated Catholic, or univerſal. Of the former Epiſtles fourteen were written by St. Paul. He was peculiarly the apoſtle of the Gentiles. He began in no long period after his converſion to extend his labours into countries far diſtant from Judæa; which, until the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, was the principal ſcene of the miniſtry of the apoſtles. And though it was regularly his practice, whitherſoever he came, to addreſs himſelf in the firſt inſtance to the Jews; their incredulity and oppoſition commonly was ſuch as ſoon to compel him to direct his endeavours almoſt excluſively to the Gentiles. It not unfrequently happened that the churches, which were thus planted in different parts of Europe and Aſia by the apoſtle, were diſtracted after his departure by novel teachers,

who came among them; or were perplexed by religious doubts ariſing from local circumſtances and events. For the removal of theſe difficulties they occaſionally conſulted their original inſtructor. Many of the Epiſtles, or letters, of St. Paul were written in reply to letters of this nature, which he had received from particular churches; or were addreſſed by him ſpontaneouſly to ſome particular church in conſequence of the information which he had received reſpecting the animoſities, the culpable practices, or the erroneous doctrines which prevailed there. They were in many caſes diſpatched by ſpecial meſſengers of diſtinguiſhed character in the Chriſtian miniſtry; who were commiſſioned by Saint Paul to rectify what was amiſs in conjunction with the elders of the church. In ſuch a correſpondence we muſt expect to meet with ſome obſcurities, ariſing from brief references to prejudices and opinions then afloat, with which we are imperfectly acquainted, and alluſions to local incidents to us wholly unknown. The principal

cauſe however which troubled the newly eſtabliſhed churches is evident. It was the arrival of Jewiſh Chriſtians jealous for the honour of the Moſaic law; and peremptory in requiring the converted Gentiles to ſubmit to all the inſtitutions of that law in addition to the Goſpel. The Jewiſh people, ſeparated by the Divine command and by their peculiar rites and uſages from the reſt of mankind; elated by the ſignal marks of favour conferred upon them by the Supreme Being, which they began to regard as proofs of their own pre-eminent merit; and proudly unwilling to diſcern that their forefathers had been entruſted with the oracles of God, and diſtinguiſhed by a ſpecial diſpenſation, for the benefit, not merely of themſelves and their deſcendents, but of the whole human race; regarded all other nations with contempt and abhorrence as impure, profane, and outcaſts from the mercy of Heaven. Though ſo many of the ancient prophets had announced that the Meſſiah ſhould bring ſalvation to all the inhabitants of the earth; though Simeon

had proclaimed him, when preſented in the Temple, "a light to lighten the Gen-"tiles (q):" though our Saviour himſelf whoſe perſonal miſſion was confined to "the loſt ſheep of the Houſe of Iſrael (r)," had repeatedly intimated that the Gentiles were a part of his flock; and had charged the diſciples, in his laſt inſtructions, to "go and baptize all nations, and preach the "Goſpel to every creature (s):" the very apoſtles, no leſs than their immediate aſſociates, continued for ſome time after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, under the influence of the prepoſſeſſions which governed their countrymen. When St. Peter, in obedience to the ſpecial command of God, viſited the Gentile Cornelius; he unequivocally declared that without that command he ſhould not have thought himſelf authoriſed to enter into the centurion's houſe (t). When, on the preaching of Peter, "the Holy Ghoſt "fell on all them which heard the word; "they of the circumciſion, which believed,

(q) Luke, i. 32. (r) Matt. xv. 24.
(s) Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark, xvi. 15.
(t) Acts, x. 28, 29.

"were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with "Peter, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo "was poured out the gift of the Holy "Ghoſt (*u*)." On St. Peter's return to Jeruſalem, he was ſtrictly reprehended by the apoſtles, who had heard an indiſtinct account of his journey to Cæſarea, for having aſſociated and eaten with Gentiles (*v*). And when in his own vindication he recounted the events which had preceded and thoſe which had attended his miſſion to Cornelius; they exclaimed with aſtoniſhment; "then hath God alſo to the "Gentiles granted repentance unto life (*w*)!" They however, being filled with the Chriſtian ſpirit of univerſal benevolence, "glo-"rified God (*x*)" for his extenſion of his mercy in Chriſt to all mankind. The uſual temper of Jewiſh converts was very different. They received the doctrine with extreme repugnance; and when they could no longer withſtand it, endeavoured to uphold the Moſaic law in its primitive emi-

(*u*) Acts, x. 44, 45. (*v*) Acts, xi. 2,
(*w*) Acts, xi. 18. (*x*) Ibid.

nence,

nence, by contending that although the Gentiles were indeed admiſſible into the Chriſtian covenant, the law of Moſes muſt be alſo accepted and punctually obeyed by them as an indiſpenſable condition of their Salvation. In almoſt every place where a church was ſettled by Saint Paul, he was followed, as ſoon as his abſence furniſhed the opportunity, by teachers of this deſcription: men who, partly from an ardent deſire to eſtabliſh their favourite tenet, partly from intereſted views, and an ambitious eagerneſs for diſtinction, vilified and traduced the character of the apoſtle, repreſenting him as unacquainted with the eſſentials of Chriſtianity, the ignorant teacher of an imperfect Goſpel. When St. Paul, by virtue of his divine commiſſion, proclaimed the total abolition of the ceremonial law, as to Jews as well as Gentiles; and loudly called on his converts of the latter claſs to ſtand faſt in the liberty with which Chriſt had made them free; the indignation of the Judaizing teachers encreaſed to inveterate hatred

againſt him; and diſplayed itſelf in every poſſible ſhape (*y*).

The firſt of the Epiſtles according to the ſeries in which they are diſpoſed in our Bibles; a ſeries regulated by attention to the ſuppoſed rank of the churches or individuals addreſſed rather than to accuracy of chronological arrangement, is that of St. Paul to the Romans. To the city of Rome Chriſtianity had been conveyed not by any

(*y*) From the Acts of the Apoſtles and the writings of St. Paul it may be collected that the doctrine of the admiſſibility of the Gentiles to an equal participation with the Jews of the privileges of the Goſpel covenant was one of the circumſtance, which moſt powerfully exaſperated the unconverted Jews againſt Chriſtianity and againſt St. Paul. Thus, when in making his defence at Jeruſalem before the people (Acts, xxi.) he recounted the miraculous manner of his converſion to faith in Chriſt, the Jews liſtened to him with calmneſs. But when he added that the Lord ſaid unto him, "Depart; for I will ſend thee far "hence unto the Gentiles;" at that word they inſtantly broke forth into uproar, caſt off their clothes, threw duſt into the air, cried out "Away with ſuch a fellow from "the earth: for it is not fit that he ſhould live!" and, had it not been for the intervention of the Roman officer and his band of ſoldiers, would have torn the apoſtle to pieces.

of

man of apoſtolical authority; but probably by converts drawn by their own private concerns from diſtant countries to the capital of the empire. But, however introduced, it had made a rapid and efficacious progreſs. Of the celebrity of the Roman church St. Paul ſpeaks in this Epiſtle (z), which he wrote from Corinth, and as appears from a compariſon of different circumſtances, A. D. 58, to confirm the Roman converts in the true faith; and particularly to guard them againſt the errors of Judaizing inſtructors, and to place the Gentile diſciple on a level in every particular with his Jewiſh brethren. St. Paul demonſtrates at great length, that the Jews and the Gentiles were equally in want of a Redeemer: alike expoſed to the wrath of God; the latter by their grievous ſins againſt their natural conſcience; the former by their violation of the Moſaic covenant, and by the very nature of that covenant itſelf; which, promiſing juſtification only to ſinleſs obedience, was inefficacious to ſave tranſgreſſors, and re-

(z) Rom. i. 8.

ferred

ferred by its types to the perfect atonement of Chriſt. At the ſame time he completely vindicates the wiſdom and the goodneſs of the Supreme Being againſt objections which might be occaſioned by this account of the imperfection of the Moſaic law: and proves that from the days of Abraham the ſalvation of the Gentiles through faith in Chriſt was predetermined and foretold. He teſtifies very warm affection for his unbelieving countrymen the Jews; and predicts their final converſion and reſtoration. He interweaves among his doctrinal inſtructions many practical leſſons of piety, and morality; inculcates the duty of conſcientious obedience to lawful magiſtrates; and earneſtly exhorts all the members of the church, Jews and Gentiles, to unity and brotherly love.

St. Paul's firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, great numbers of whom he had converted during a reſidence of eighteen months in their city, appears from internal marks to have been written from Epheſus, A. D. 56,

about

about three years after he had left Corinth. The apoſtle vindicates his own character againſt the calumnies of Judaizing teachers; and, after praiſing the Corinthians on ſome accounts, ſeverely reproves them for various inſtances of miſconduct. He then proceeds to anſwer certain queſtions reſpecting marriage, the uſe of meats offered to idols, and other points concerning which the Corinthian church had conſulted him by letter: cenſures the groſs irreverence manifeſted in their mode of celebrating the Lord's ſupper: explains the diverſity of ſpiritual gifts beſtowed by the Holy Ghoſt: exhorts to unity and charity: and delivers a moſt impreſſive leſſon on the reſurrection of the dead, a truth which by ſome was allegorized or denied.

About a year afterwards St. Paul, then in Macedonia, having received from Titus, the bearer of the preceding epiſtle, an account of the reſpectful attention with which the injunctions contained in it had been obeyed at Corinth, and of the warm attachment

ment of the great body of the church to the apoſtle, addreſſes a ſecond letter to the Corinthians. Among other points he enlarges in the ſtrongeſt terms on the joy which he derived from this intelligence, and on his ardent affection for his repentant converts: vindicates himſelf from the charge of inconſiſtency and ficklenefs, on account of not having yet fulfilled his known purpoſe of viſiting them again: dilates on the glorious office of a miniſter of Chriſt: refutes the malignant imputations of his Judaizing opponents: and zealouſly excites the Corinthian church to godlineſs, to purity of life, and to liberality in contributing to the relief of the diſtreſſed Chriſtians in Judæa.

Galatia was a country of Aſia Minor. St. Paul appears, from the hiſtory in the Acts, to have preached there A. D. 51, and again, A. D. 53. (a) The Epiſtle was probably written in the interval between theſe two viſits; as he ſpeaks at the commencement

(a) Acts, xviii. 11.

of

of his letter as though he had recently been among them (*b*), yet does not intimate in any part of it that he had inſtructed them twice. It was evidently occaſioned by the information which had reached St. Paul of the ſucceſs with which Judaizing teachers had laboured to ſubvert his own credit with the Galatian converts, and to bring them into ſubjection to the Moſaic law. He therefore eſtabliſhes in the firſt place his own ſpecial appointment from Chriſt to the office of an apoſtle, and to a perfect equality in rank and authority with the original apoſtles. He then proceeds to ſhew that the Moſaic law was intended to be of temporary obligation, and to ceaſe when it had performed its office of preparing the way for the coming of the Meſſiah: that it was thenceforth, as to its ceremonial rites and ordinances, totally aboliſhed (*c*): and that to look to it for ſalvation was, in effect, to renounce all reliance on redemption through Jeſus Chriſt. He concludes with various pertinent and practical admonitions.

(*b*) Gal. i. 6. (*c*) Gal. iii. iv.

Epheſus,

Epheſus, a city of Ionia, was the capital of the whole region denominated under the Roman government the proconſular Aſia. St. Paul had eſtabliſhed a Chriſtian church there partly in the year A. D. 53; and partly in a ſubſequent reſidence of two years beginning A. D. 54. He wrote this Epiſtle during his firſt impriſonment (*d*) at Rome, and probably about A. D. 61. It was occaſioned by the intelligence which the apoſtle had received concerning the ſtate of the Epheſian Church (*e*). In the former part of the letter he affectionately exhorts the Epheſians to ſtedfaſtneſs in the genuine doctrines of the Goſpel, and enlarges on the free mercy of God as extended to the Gentiles: intimating that his zeal in upholding the Chriſtian privileges of the Gentile converts had been the cauſe of his preſent impriſonment (*f*). In the latter part he delivers many practical injunctions; and points out the moral duties peculiarly in-

(*d*) Epheſ. iv. 1. vi. 20. (*e*) Epheſ. i. 15.
(*f*) Epheſ. iii. 1. See Acts, xxii. 21, &c.

cumbent

cumbent on individuals in conſequence of their different relative ſituations.

Philippi, a city of Macedonia, was viſited by St. Paul, A. D. 51, and at leaſt once afterwards. His Chriſtian converts there, who had already given a ſtrong proof of their faithful regard for him (*g*), hearing of his impriſonment at Rome, ſent one of their number, Epaphroditus, to ſupply his pecuniary wants, and to enquire concerning his welfare. By his hands St. Paul returned this Epiſtle, which appears to have been written (*h*) after a reſidence of ſome length at Rome, and probably about A. D. 62, towards the cloſe of his impriſonment (*i*). It abounds in expreſſions of affection for the Philippians; and in doctrinal and practical exhortations, ſimilar in ſeveral reſpects to thoſe contained in the Epiſtle to the Epheſians.

(*g*) Philipp. iv. 15, 16. (*h*) Philipp. ii. 25. vi. 18.
(*i*) Philipp. i. 12—17. ii. 23, 24.

Coloſſe

Coloſſe was a large city of Phrygia in Aſia Minor, which has been thought not to have been viſited by St. Paul himſelf (*k*); but to have received the Goſpel through the preaching of his "dear fellow-ſervant, "Epaphras (*l*)." In that caſe it might probably be to confirm by the ſanction of his own apoſtolical authority the doctrine preached by Epaphras (*m*), that St. Paul addreſſed his Epiſtle to the Coloſſians. Yet the known fact of St. Paul having already viſited Phrygia twice, and having in the latter journey gone over all the country in order, ſtrengthening the diſciples (*n*), concurs with the tenor of the Epiſtle itſelf, in which affection and authority are happily blended, to confirm the ſuppoſition,

(*k*) Coloſſ. ii. 1. (*l*) Col. i. 7. and ſee iv. 12, 13.

(*m*) Epaphras, who was himſelf a Coloſſian, and was now at Rome, Coloſſ. iv. 12, 13, had probably been ſent by the church at Coloſſe for a purpoſe ſimilar to that, for which Epaphroditus had been diſpatched by the Philippians. We find afterwards, Philem. 23, that he was impriſoned as well as St. Paul; and we cannot doubt that it was for the ſame cauſe, the preaching of the Goſpel of Chriſt to the Gentiles.

(*n*) Acts, xvi. 6. xviii. 23.

that

that St. Paul had originally founded the church at Coloſſe; and that Epaphras had afterwards laboured with fidelity and diligence for its edification. The epiſtle was written during the apoſtle's impriſonment at Rome (*o*). And the ſtriking reſemblance which in many paſſages it bears both in ſentiment and language to the Epiſtle to the Epheſians, affords a very ſtrong preſumption that the one epiſtle was compoſed before the train of thought ſuggeſted by the other had quitted the mind of the writer. They appear alſo to have been ſent by the ſame meſſenger (*p*).

Theſſalonica, the chief city of Macedonia, had been viſited A. D. 51, by St. Paul; who, being driven away after a ſhort reſidence by a perſecution raiſed by the Jews (*q*), had ſoon afterwards ſent Timothy thither (*r*) again from Athens, to eſtabliſh

(*o*) Coloſſ. iv. 3. 18.

(*p*) Tychicus—Eph. vi. 21, 22. Coloſſ. iv. 7—9. Oneſimus, as being of Coloſſe, is joined with Tychicus as a meſſenger to that city.

(*q*) Acts, xvii. (*r*) 1 Theſſ. iii. 1, 2.

the church. Timothy returned to St. Paul at Corinth (*s*); from which place, probably A. D. 52, that apoſtle addreſſed his firſt Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians. Among other topics which he introduces, he thanks God for the Chriſtian attainments and conduct of the Theſſalonian converts, notwithſtanding the oppoſition of thoſe among them who were enemies to the Goſpel: dwells on his own affection for them: and exhorts them not to faint under perſecution, and to abound more and more in Chriſtian virtues, eſpecially in purity: intimates that to deſpiſe his admonitions is to deſpiſe God, by whoſe inſpiration he ſpeaks: warns them againſt immoderate ſorrow for the dead; encourages them with the proſpect of the reſurrection; and expatiates on the ſuddenneſs of the coming of Chriſt.

The exhortations of Saint Paul to be at all times prepared for the tribunal of Chriſt appear to have been in part miſunderſtood by the Theſſalonians; and to have im-

(*s*) Acts, xviii. 5.

preſſed them with the opinion that the diſſolution of the world, and the day of judgement were at hand. To correct this miſapprehenſion ſeems to have been the leading object of the apoſtle in his ſecond letter; which was probably written within ſome few months after the former. He inſtructs them that before the arrival of that awful period an apoſtaſy ſhould take place in the church of Chriſt, under the influence of an hoſtile potentate figuratively denominated the "man of ſin, the ſon of "perdition;" whom the apoſtle deſcribes as exalting himſelf againſt the Divine juriſdiction, and as ſeating himſelf in the Temple of God, and uſurping the power of God: terms which clearly denote an eccleſiaſtical power aſſuming to itſelf a preeminence over the Chriſtian church, and a right to ſuperſede and abrogate the laws of the Goſpel. St. Paul refers the Theſſalonians to the information which, when preſent, he had communicated to them reſpecting this ſubject: and concludes according to

his general cuſtom with ſome practical admonitions.

Timothy, the diſciple and companion of St. Paul, had been left at Epheſus with epiſcopal authority to quiet the diſorders, and rectify the abuſes, prevalent in the church of that city (*t*). To inſtruct and animate him in the execution of this office was the main purpoſe of the firſt Epiſtle which St. Paul addreſſed to him. It contains many directions concerning the adminiſtration of divine worſhip, the government of the church, and the qualifications of biſhops and other miniſters of the Goſpel: predicts the riſe and ſucceſs of apoſtate teachers; and ſolemnly calls on Timothy to be faithful in the diſcharge of his duty. The epiſtle was probably written about A. D. 64. (*u*)

(*t*) 1 Tim. i. 3.

(*u*) For the elucidation of the controverted date of theſe two epiſtles to Timothy ſee Dr. Paley's Horæ Paulinæ, p. 323, and Biſhop Pretyman's Elements of Chriſtian Theology, vol. ii. p. 420, &c.

St.

St. Paul when he wrote his ſecond Epiſtle to Timothy, was evidently a priſoner at Rome (*v*). This impriſonment appears from various circumſtances not to have been that which is recorded in the concluſion of the Acts; but a ſecond, which he underwent according to the concurrent voice of the early Chriſtian writers before his martyrdom under Nero. The date, therefore, of the preſent epiſtle was probably A. D. 65. Whether Timothy was ſtill at Epheſus is not certain: but he appears from ſome paſſages in the epiſtle to have been, if not there, in the neighbouring parts of Aſia. The topics noticed in this epiſtle are of the ſame nature with ſome of thoſe diſcuſſed in the former; and the exhortations to Timothy are equally ſolemn and affectionate. Towards the concluſion of it St. Paul ſpeaks with triumphant joy of his own approaching diſſolution, and of the proſpect of his eternal reward.

(*v*) 2 Tim. i. 8. 16, 17.

Titus was a Greek converted early by St. Paul (*w*); who had now left him in Crete to ſuperintend the churches with epiſcopal power. Neither the date of the epiſtle, nor the place whence it was written is aſcertained; but it ſeems not improbable that it was written from Greece, and about A. D. 64. The preſent office of Titus reſembled that of Timothy at Epheſus. Hence many of the directions in the Epiſtle to Titus are ſimilar to thoſe contained in the firſt Epiſtle to Timothy. The Jewiſh converts among the Cretans are mentioned by St. Paul with particular cenſure.

Philemon, to whom St. Paul, who converted him to the Chriſtian faith (*x*), has addreſſed an epiſtle, was an inhabitant of Coloſſe (*y*). His ſervant Oneſimus had run

(*w*) Gal. ii. 1—3. Titus, i. 4, 5.

(*x*) Philem. 19.

(*y*) For Oneſimus, his ſervant, was, Col. iv. 9. and ſo was Archippus, Col. iv. 17. whom St. Paul joins in the beginning of his letter with Philemon.

away

away (z) from him to Rome: and had been converted by St. Paul, then a priſoner there. St. Paul ſent him back to Coloſſe as the bearer, in conjunction with Tychicus, of a public epiſtle to the church in that city; and charged individually with a private letter to his maſter, written with force, yet with ſingular delicacy, and admirably calculated to conciliate forgiveneſs for Oneſimus.

It has been doubted both in ancient and in modern times whether the Epiſtle to the Hebrews was written by St. Paul. This epiſtle has been attributed ſucceſſively to the companions of the apoſtle, St. Luke, Barnabas, and Clement. But the weight of early teſtimony is in favour of the received opinion, which aſcribes it to the apoſtle himſelf. And that opinion is confirmed by internal evidence furniſhed by the letter. It was written, as the concluding words demonſtrate, from Italy; and, as various

(x) That Oneſimus had robbed Philemon has been aſſerted on the authority of ver. 18. which by no means bears out ſuch a concluſion.

(a) Col. iv. 7—9.

paſſages which ſpeak of the ſervice of the Jewiſh Temple as ſtill performing (*b*) evince, before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. The writer deſcribes himſelf as having been in bonds (*c*) for the cauſe of the Goſpel: a circumſtance which renders it probable that the date of the epiſtle was about A. D. 63, after St. Paul was releaſed from his firſt impriſonment at Rome. It was addreſſed to the Jewiſh converts of Paleſtine, denominated Hebrews in contradiſtinction (*d*) to the Jews of Greece and other regions. Reſiding in the very country which had been the ſcene choſen for the eſtabliſhment of the Moſaic ritual, and ſurrounded by an hoſtile multitude of unconverted Jews; the Chriſtian diſciples of that race were under peculiar temptations, if not to apoſtatiſe from the faith of Chriſt, yet to debaſe it by additions borrowed from Judaiſm. St. Paul therefore opens his epiſtle with deſcribing in the ſtrongeſt and moſt ſublime expreſſions the Divine nature and tranſ-

(*b*) Heb viii. 4. ix. 25. x. 11. xiii. 10.
(*c*) x. 34. (*d*) Acts, vi. 1.

cendent

cendent dignity of Jeſus, the Son of God. He then enlarges on the guilt of refuſing to believe in him and to obey him; enforces and illuſtrates by various arguments peculiarly adapted to have weight with the Jews, the ſuperiority of the unchangeable prieſthood and complete atonement of Chriſt over the temporary ineffectual and now ſuperſeded Levitical inſtitutions. By the example of the ancient patriarchs and prophets, he encourages the Hebrews to perſeverance in faith and patience and conſtancy under the perſecutions to which they were expoſed.

St. James, who addreſſes his epiſtle "to "the twelve tribes which are ſcattered "abroad," was one of the twelve apoſtles. He is denominated by St. Mark, "James "the Leſs (*e*)," to diſtinguiſh him from the other apoſtle James, the brother of St. John; and was, as the Scripture informs us, "the brother" (a Jewiſh appellation for

(*e*) Mark, xv. 40.

any

any near kinſman) " of Chriſt (*f*)." He ſeems to have reſided conſtantly at Jeruſalem, and to have been a perſon of eminent diſtinction among the apoſtles (*g*). According to the account of Euſebius, in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, he was put to death in a tumult by the unbelieving Jews, A. D. 62; and is thought to have compoſed his epiſtle not long before. He ſtrenuouſly exhorts his countrymen to ſtedfaſtneſs under perſecution, and to holineſs and humility; and ſeverely reprehends the animoſities, arrogance, luxury, and vice prevalent among

(*f*) Matt. xiii. 55. Mark, vi. 3. St. Paul ſpeaks, Gal. i. xix. of " the apoſtle James, the Lord's brother." There is no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the other James was related to our Saviour. James the Leſs is thought by ſome, but apparently without reaſon, to have been the ſon of Joſeph by a former wife antecedently to his marriage with the Virgin Mary. But as Alpheus, the father of James, is deemed by learned enquirers to have been the ſame perſon with Cleopas; and as the wife of Cleopas is ſtyled the ſiſter of the Virgin, (John, xix. 25.) and bore the ſame name with the mother of James, (Mark, xv. 41.) this apoſtle appears to have been couſin-german to Chriſt.

(*g*) Acts, xii. 17. (the other apoſtle James was already put to death by Herod, 2.) xv. 13. xxi. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 7. Gal. i. 19. ii. 9. 12.

them,

them, eſpecially among the rich. He alſo dwells on the true nature of faith; and exerts himſelf with great earneſtneſs in oppoſition to the doctrines of thoſe perſons, who miſunderſtanding the import of St. Paul's arguments reſpecting the neceſſity of faith to ſalvation, had inferred and taught that there was no neceſſity for good works.

St. Peter writes his firſt general epiſtle "to the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and "Bithynia;" countries in which he is ſaid to have preached the Goſpel in the latter part of his life. Some authors conſider the "ſcattered ſtrangers" as implying excluſively the diſperſed Jewiſh converts. And others conceive the terms to include the Gentile Chriſtians, as being thinly ſpread among ſurrounding idolaters: and as abroad all Chriſtians may with equal propriety be termed, in the ſubſequent words of the apoſtle, "ſtrangers and pilgrims (*b*)" upon earth. The letter was written from "Ba-

(*b*) 1 Peter, ii. 11.

"bylon;"

" bylon (*i*);" under which name the apoſtle is generally ſuppoſed to mean Rome, ſo denominated by St. John in the Revelations. As there is no intimation in the Acts that St. Peter was at Rome antecedently to the releaſe of St. Paul, A. D. 63, from his firſt impriſonment there; this epiſtle was probably not written prior to that year. It expatiates on the full atonement and glory of Chriſt; on the obligation of being ready to ſuffer for the Goſpel; and on other Chriſtian duties, general and particular, enforced by the conſideration of the judgement to come.

The date of the ſecond Epiſtle of St. Peter is fixed by his alluſion to his (*k*) approaching martyrdom; which took place at Rome A. D. 67; and, as Chriſt had forewarned him (*l*), by crucifixion. It was addreſſed to the ſame perſons to whom the former had been written (*m*). In this epiſtle, he ſolemnly affirms, as ſtanding on the brink

(*i*) 1 Peter, v. 13.
(*k*) 2 Peter, i. 13, 14.
(*l*) John, ii. 18; 19.
(*m*) 2 Peter, iii. 1.

of

of the grave, the truth of Chriſtianity; and calls on the believers in Chriſt to advance by the grace of God from one virtue to another towards Chriſtian perfection. He predicts the riſe of heretical teachers, corrupt in their lives as well as in their doctrine, who ſhould introduce the moſt deteſtable tenets, and even "deny the Lord who "bought them;" and ſhould be puniſhed, like the ſinners of the antediluvian world, with the exemplary vengeance of Heaven. In reply to the ſcoffers of his time, he gives an awful deſcription of the future deſtruction of the world by fire, and the final judgement of all mankind: and notices the perverſe interpretations affixed to parts of the epiſtles of his "beloved brother Paul," whoſe epiſtles he expreſsly affirms to be ſacred Scriptures. He probably was the more ſolicitous to mention that apoſtle in terms of the higheſt and moſt affectionate praiſe: as knowing that in one inſtance his own timidity and weakneſs had been juſtly reproved by St. Paul (*n*); and that the Ju-

(*n*) Gal. ii. 11—16.

daizing

daizing Chriſtians were deſirous of falſely repreſenting himſelf as favourable to the impoſition of the Moſaic law on the Gentile converts.

Of the firſt Epiſtle of St. John the date is not aſcertained, nor the place whence it was written. It contains no paſſage, which ſeems to imply that it was addreſſed otherwiſe than to Chriſtians in general. The apoſtle, who begins by affirming his own knowledge as an eye-witneſs of the truth of the Goſpel, aſſerts the pre-exiſtence and incarnation of the Son of God, and other fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity, againſt the Gnoſtic and Cerinthian hereſies which already prevailed. He likewiſe delivers various admonitions to the performance of Chriſtian duties; and particularly to the maintainance of univerſal kindneſs and brotherly love, founded on gratitude for the Divine love manifeſted in our redemption.

The ſecond Epiſtle of St. John inculcates the ſame doctrines as the former, and nearly

in

in the ſame terms. From theſe circumſtances it appears to have been written about the ſame time. It is not known who "the lady" was, to whom it is addreſſed.

Gaius, whoſe hoſpitality to miniſters of the Goſpel St. John applauds in his third Epiſtle, was not improbably the Gaius of Corinth, whom St. Paul ſtyles his hoſt, and that of the whole church (*o*): but that point is uncertain. Nor is the date of the epiſtle known.

Jude, the author of the remaining general epiſtle, was the "Judas, not Iſcariot," and the "Judas, ſon of Alpheus," mentioned in the Goſpels. He was brother to James the Leſs, and nearly related to our Saviour. Nothing is recorded either of the ſcene of his miniſterial labours, or of the time and manner of his death. His epiſtle was evidently written ſubſequently to the Epiſtles of St. Paul to Timothy (*p*), and the ſecond Epiſtle

(*o*) Romans, xvi. 23. 1 Cor. i. 14.

(*p*) Compare Jude, 17. 19. with 1 Tim. iv. 1.—2 Tim. iii. 1.—2 Pet. iii. 3.

of

of St. Peter; the latter of which he cloſely copies, after having earneſtly exhorted Chriſtians to contend for the true faith as originally delivered to the ſaints.

The only book of the New Teſtament which remains to be conſidered, belongs to the prophetical claſs; and is denominated, from the nature of its contents, the Apocalypſe, or Book of Revelations. It was written by St. John in the Iſle of Patmos, to which he was baniſhed in the reign, as Irenæus and other early writers aſſert, of Domitian. It contains, after a moſt ſublime introductory viſion, a deſcription of the exiſting ſtate of the Chriſtian churches in ſeven cities of Aſia Minor, under the epiſcopal juriſdiction of St. John; and afterwards an emblematical ſeries of prophetical Revelations, ſhadowing out the fortunes of the church of Chriſt from the times of the apoſtle to the day of judgement. The fulfilment of many of theſe prophecies has been indiſputably proved: and the gradual accompliſhment of the remainder will ex-

plain parts of the book which are yet obſcure, and add new evidence to the truth of Chriſtianity.

The teſtimonies borne by the earlieſt Chriſtian writers to the Epiſtles and to the book of Revelations are not leſs ſatisfactory than thoſe, which have been already produced in ſupport of the Divine authority of the Goſpels and Acts of the Apoſtles. The principal atteſtations afforded to the Epiſtles of St. Paul ſhall be mentioned in the firſt place. At the head of theſe atteſtations muſt be placed the noble evidence already cited as given to theſe Epiſtles by St. Peter, who unequivocally ranks them among the ſacred Scriptures (*q*). Clement of Rome, the companion of St. Paul, quotes paſſages from the Epiſtle to the Romans, the firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, and the Epiſtle to the Hebrews: mentioning in the ſecond caſe St. Paul as the author; in the others, citing the paſſages without the

(*q*) 2 Peter, iii. 15. 16.

name of the writer, according to the method of quoting Scripture prevalent among the early Chriſtians. Ignatius quotes the Epiſtle to the Epheſians. Polycarp cites the ſame Epiſtle, and alſo that to the Philippians; and refers incidentally to fourteen or fifteen books of the New Teſtament, among which are ten of St. Paul's Epiſtles; calling them in general terms Holy Scriptures, and oracles of the Lord. The ſhort Epiſtle to Philemon is in fact the only one, to which there is not a diſtinct reference in the ſcanty remains which have reached us of the works of the apoſtolical fathers; that is to ſay, of thoſe Chriſtian writers, who lived and converſed with ſome of the apoſtles. It is ſcarcely neceſſary to carry down the line of teſtimony further. It may however be added briefly, omitting ſuch writers as refer only to few of St. Paul's Epiſtles, that Juſtin Martyr alludes to ſeven of them: Theophilus of Antioch to eight; Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Cyprian, to all except that to Philemon, and to the Hebrews: Epiphanius and Auguſtine

guſtine to all except that to the Hebrews: and Tertullian (who aſcribes indeed the laſt mentioned Epiſtle to Barnabas), Origen, Dionyſius of Alexandria, Euſebius, Athanaſius, Jerome, and Chryſoſtom, to every one of the fourteen without exception.

With reſpect to the ſeven remaining Epiſtles, there are references in the brief writings of Clement of Rome and of Hermas to that of St. James, to the firſt and ſecond of St. Peter, and to the firſt of St. John. Polycarp alſo and Irenæus refer to the ſecond and fourth of theſe: Origen and Euſebius, not to mention other ſeparate teſtimonies, to all the four. The ſecond Epiſtle of St. John is noticed by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Dionyſius of Alexandria. The third is ſuppoſed to be noticed by Ignatius; and is expreſsly mentioned by Origen, Euſebius, Cyril, and others. The Epiſtle of Jude is quoted by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Dionyſius of Alexandria, and the ſucceeding fathers. Of the ſeven preceding Epiſtles, five, namely

thoſe of James, the ſecond of St. Peter, the ſecond and third of St. John, and that of Jude, were not acknowledged as ſacred Scriptures by the Chriſtian church ſo early as the remaining two. The temporary doubt reſpecting the Epiſtle of St. James was this: whether James, the firſt biſhop of Jeruſalem, its acknowledged author, was the ſame perſon with the apoſtle James the Leſs, or only his cotemporary (*r*). The ſecond and third Epiſtles of St. John, being addreſſed to private individuals, were for a time not generally known: and when known, there was, for a certain time, a doubt in the minds of ſome, whether one at leaſt of them might not have been written by a preſbyter of Epheſus of the ſame name with the apoſtle. The Epiſtle of Jude was rejected by many, as we learn from St. Jerome, [in conſequence of its containing a quotation from a prophecy (probably tra-

(*r*) The antiquity of the Epiſtle was undoubted; as it is found in the Syriac verſion, which was made within the firſt century: and made for the uſe of converted Jews, the very perſons to whom the Epiſtle of St. James is addreſſed.

ditional)

ditional) of Enoch. Perhaps the reſemblance which this Epiſtle bears to the ſecond Epiſtle of St. Peter might render that alſo ſuſpected. All theſe doubts however were by due enquiry ſatisfactorily removed.

To the book of Revelations the atteſtations are equally deciſive. By Juſtin Martyr it is aſcribed to St. John; and alſo by Irenæus. The teſtimony of the latter writer has particular weight, as he relates that he had received an explanation of a paſſage in the Revelations from thoſe who had converſed with St. John the author: in which declaration he probably alludes to his own inſtructor Polycarp, who had been the diſciple of St. John. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, and many ſucceeding fathers concur in attributing the work to the ſame apoſtle. In ſome of the antient catalogues of the Scriptures this book was omitted: a circumſtance which, when the early teſtimonies already recited are conſidered, cannot eaſily be attributed

to any doubt having ever been entertained reſpecting its genuineneſs or authenticity; but was probably owing to its being regarded as leſs adapted than the other Scriptures, from its myſterious nature, for general uſe in the churches.

In addition to the proofs which have been cited in the preſent chapter to ſubſtantiate the authenticity and Divine authority of the New Teſtament, the attention of the reader is requeſted to the following facts; which Dr. Lardner and other learned enquirers have indiſputably aſcertained by teſtimonies deduced from the remaining works of the early Chriſtian writers. The Scriptures were very ſoon collected into one diſtinct volume (*s*). They were regularly diſtinguiſhed by the terms "Holy,"

(*s*) Ignatius, who was biſhop of Antioch A. D. 73. uſes language that implies this to have been the caſe in his time. See Paley's Evidences, v. i. (1ſt edit.) p. 283, 284. Quadratus and Irenæus are ſtill more diſtinct. Melito, biſhop of Sardis, A. D. 178. proves by an incidental expreſſion that the volume of Chriſtian Scriptures was then denominated the "New Teſtament." It was at firſt called "the Goſpels and Apoſtles."

"Divine,"

"Divine," and other ſimilar appellations. They were publicly read and expounded in Chriſtian aſſemblies. They were tranſlated into various languages, and illuſtrated by harmonies and commentaries. They were generally appealed to as deciſive by contending ſects of Chriſtians. They were regarded by the enemies of Chriſtianity as the records of the religion, and attacked as ſuch. The ſeveral books were arranged in regular catalogues. And no book was received into the ſacred canon without ample enquiry into its title to admiſſion: an enquiry rendered the more rigorous by the exiſtence, though not, as it appears, until the ſecond century (*t*), of pretended Goſpels and other apocryphal books, to which the reverſe of each of the preceding propoſitions may be diſtinctly applied. "Beſides "our Goſpels and the Acts of the Apoſtles "no Chriſtian hiſtory, claiming to be "written by an apoſtle or apoſtolical man, "is quoted within three hundred years

(*t*) Paley's Evid. vol. i. p. 373.

" after the birth of Chriſt, by any writer " now extant or known; or, if quoted, is " not quoted with marks of cenſure and " rejection (*u*)." They were rejected, becauſe they had no evidence in their favour: and the canonical books were received, becauſe the evidence in their favour was irreſiſtible. It deſerves to be noticed that the apocryphal books corroborate the credit of the real Scriptures. Their very exiſtence indicated that real Scriptures, which they imitated, were publicly received. They frequently profeſſed to be the works of men of diſtinguiſhed character in the real Scriptures. They aſſumed the truth of the facts recorded in the real Scriptures; and contained no contradictions to thoſe facts, but merely ventured to accumulate unauthoriſed additions.

With reſpect to the nature and the extent of inſpiration, as afforded to the writers of the New Teſtament, I would refer to the general remarks which have been made

(*u*) Paley's Evid. vol. i. p. 368.

in

in a former chapter on the Inſpiration of the Jewiſh Scriptures. The arguments in the preſent chapter which have tended to eſtabliſh the concluſion, that the writers of the New Teſtament were inſpired, may fitly be cloſed with a brief ſtatement of the evidence which the Scriptures themſelves advance or ſuggeſt. In the firſt place then, let it be conſidered whether it is not a thing in itſelf utterly improbable that the Supreme Being, after having ordained that the religious books of thoſe who lived under the introductory Moſaic diſpenſation ſhould be written by inſpired penmen; ſhould leave the Chriſtian world to depend for the records of its religion on uninſpired authority. In the next place, let it be remembered that Chriſt, in addition to his perſonal inſtructions antecedently to his crucifixion, and to thoſe delivered in the forty days after his reſurrection during which he continued with his diſciples, "ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the "kingdom of God (*v*);" promiſed them

(*v*) Acts, i. 3.

"the

"the Comforter," the Holy Spirit, "the "Spirit of Truth," who ſhould teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatſoever Chriſt had ſaid unto them; and ſhould guide them into all truth, and abide with them for ever (*w*). The aid of this heavenly Guide was aſſuredly not withheld from them, when they were engaged in delivering written inſtructions, whether in the form of Goſpels or of Epiſtles, for the edification of the Chriſtian church to the end of time. The very words of the promiſe, that it ſhould abide with them for ever, contradict the ſuppoſition: and the more ſo, as we know that the full inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt was ſpecially promiſed always to attend them on a lighter occaſion, namely when they were to make their defence before magiſtrates (*x*). Now five of the writers of the New Teſtament were of the number of the apoſtles, to

(*w*) John, xiv. 16–26.

(*x*) Matt. x. 19, 20. Mark, xiii. 11. Luke, xii. 11, 12.

whom

whom all these promises were personally made. Of the remaining three, St. Paul repeatedly asserts his own inspiration, and his equality in every point with all the other apostles (*y*). With respect to the others, St. Mark and St. Luke, we cannot conceive that God, after inspiring the writers of two Gospels, would leave two other Gospels containing additional facts concerning the life of Christ, and also a very important history of the early Christian church, to be written by uninspired men: nor that these latter writings would have been immediately placed on a level with the former, as it has already been shewn that they were, unless the early Christians had known, what they appear to have unanimously asserted, that St. Mark and St. Luke were filled with the Holy Ghost. Even if it were supposed, though there is no ground for the supposition, that these two writers were not actually inspired; but wrote, the one under

(*y*) Gal. i. 11, 12.—1 Cor. ii. 10—13.—2 Cor. xi. 5. xii. 11. 1 Thes. iv. 8.

the

the ſuperintendence of St. Peter, the other of St. Paul; the Divine authority of the writings would remain the ſame. Finally, the fulfilment of predictions recorded in the New Teſtament forms an additional link in the chain of proofs, by which its inſpiration is eſtabliſhed.

That the Scriptures of the New Teſtament have deſcended pure to our hands is evinced by the accordance of the early verſions with our preſent Greek text: by the collations which have taken place of great numbers of exiſting manuſcripts, ſome of them extremely ancient; which collations, while they ſhew that miſtakes, as it was to be expected, have been made in the individual manuſcripts by the tranſcribers, prove thoſe miſtakes to be of trifling importance, and afford the means of correcting them: and by the utter impoſſibility that either negligence or deſign could have introduced, without detection, any material alteration into a book diſperſed among millions in widely diſtant

countries, and among many diſcordant ſects; regarded by them all as the rule of their faith and practice; and in conſtant and regular uſe among them all in public worſhip, in private meditation, and in their vehement and unceaſing controverſies with each other.

Receiving then, on theſe ſolid grounds of rational conviction, the Holy Scriptures with thankfulneſs and reverence as the word of God; regard and ſtudy them daily as the rule to which you are to conform every thought and word and action: and as the rule by which all your thoughts and words and actions will be tried at the laſt day before the judgement-ſeat of Chriſt.

CHAP. VI.

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

I. If the authenticity and inſpiration of the Scriptures have been eſtabliſhed in the two preceding chapters; then the truth of the Chriſtian religion has alſo been demonſtrated. This propoſition is ſelf-evident. Nay, if there had remained any doubt concerning the inſpiration of the writers of the Old and New Teſtament; if it had not pleaſed God that the Bible ſhould be able to claim a higher character than that of an authentic narrative written by uninſpired men; Chriſtianity ſtill would have been proved. If the predictions there recorded were actually delivered; if the facts there related actually took place; in other words, if the Bible had merely ſpoken truth through the aid of human information and veracity; the certainty of the Chriſtian religion

religion would ſtill have been indiſputable. If the miraculous circumſtances which, according to antecedent prophecies, were to characterize the birth, the life, the death and the reſurrection of the Meſſiah, all united in Jeſus Chriſt; he was the Meſſiah. If the predictions which Jeſus Chriſt delivered were literally fulfilled; if the ſupernatural powers which he engaged to beſtow on his diſciples were punctually conferred; he was what he affirmed himſelf to be, the Son of God, the promiſed and long expected Redeemer. But when the real ſtate of the caſe is taken into the account; when we conſider that, to render knowledge perfect and to enſure fidelity from ſuſpicion, the ſuperintending aid of the Holy Spirit of God ever accompanied the ſacred penmen; we might preſume that every poſſibility of doubt as to the certainty of the religion thus introduced and confirmed to mankind muſt vaniſh from the breaſts of unprejudiced enquirers. The queſtion therefore of the truth of Chriſtianity might ſafely be reſted on theſe grounds. It may

be

be of uſe, however, on account of the ſupreme importance of the ſubject; and from regard to the difference in the degree of force, with which experience ſhews that different arguments ſtrike different minds; to ſubjoin to the foregoing remarks ſome collateral arguments, which evince that the Chriſtian religion came from God.

II. The general ſtate of the world, at the time when Chriſtianity was promulgated, was confeſſedly ſuch as to render a further revelation of the will of God highly deſirable to mankind. The Heathen nations, Greeks, Romans, Barbarians, were immerſed in the groſſeſt idolatry. It was not merely that they worſhipped ſtocks and ſtones. Their ſuppoſed deities were uſually repreſented of characters ſo deteſtably flagitious, that we ſhould rather have expected them to have been ſingled out as objects of abhorrence than of adoration. We know with how much greater proneneſs and facility men imitate a pattern of vice

vice than of virtue. We know how extremely imperfect are the piety and morality of the collective body of Chriſtians, who nominally at leaſt profeſs to take their holy and ſinleſs Redeemer for their model, and to look for eternal happineſs or miſery as the certain conſequence of their conduct in the preſent ſcene of probation. We might therefore form, by ſpeculative reaſoning, a juſt opinion of the ſtate of morals likely to be prevalent among nations who worſhipped Jupiter, and Bacchus, and Mercury, and their aſſociates in the Heathen Pantheon. Turn to hiſtory, and you find the diſplay of depravity, which your imagination had pictured, delineated in ſtill more glaring colours. The ſcattered examples of eminent virtue recorded in the annals of Greece and Rome, examples the brighter on account of their ſcarcity and of the gloomy contraſt with which they are ſurrounded, militate not againſt the truth of this general repreſentation. The occaſional efforts of ſome philoſophers to introduce better principles and better practice, had no

effect on the great maſs of the community. The philoſophers themſelves were frequently ſtained with open vice. Many of their tenets were abſurd and even impious: and the reſt were too obſcure and too refined for popular apprehenſion, or too little intereſting for popular attachment: and being founded on conjecture and theoretical arguments, carried with them no ſanction which could enſure ſtedfaſt belief or habitual obedience. Socrates, the wiſeſt of the philoſophers, avowed in the ſtrongeſt terms the neceſſity for the interpoſition of a Divine inſtructor for the reformation of the world. From the Heathens caſt your eyes on the Jews. What had been the fruit of a diſpenſation delivered to their forefathers by the voice of God himſelf, confirmed by unnumbered miracles, upheld by national rewards and national judgements, and enforced by a long ſucceſſion of prophets? Little more among the bulk of the people, for I ſpeak not of the more virtuous exceptions, than that they were at length purified from

idolatry.

idolatry. In other reſpects they were proverbially proud, ſelfiſh, and intolerant: placing their confidence on their groundleſs traditions, rather than on the Scriptures; on their deſcent from Abraham, rather than on perſonal righteouſneſs; on the obſervance of ceremonial ordinances, rather than on the practice of piety and good works. Such being the general condition of mankind, in conſequence of their having rendered thus inefficacious, by their own frailty and perverſeneſs, the invitations and motives to righteouſneſs which their merciful Creator had for ſo many ages ſet before them, partly by the light of natural conſcience, and partly by ſpecial revelation: it perhaps was not wholly unreaſonable humbly to hope, that He who had already done ſo much of his own free-will for his undeſerving and ſinful creatures, might yet in his infinite mercy do ſomewhat more. At leaſt it was evident, that if he ſhould vouchſafe to them a further diſcovery of his good pleaſure, and encourage them with addi-

tional aids and incitements to virtue; ſuch a diſpenſation would be a bleſſing, for which the warmeſt gratitude would be a moſt inadequate return. Now, if a conſiderate man, antecedently to all knowledge of the Chriſtian plan of redemption, had been aſked what particulars, conſiſtent with the attributes of God and the ſituation of mankind, he ſhould be principally ſolicitous to find in a future revelation; what, after full reflection, would have been his reply? He would have replied, that the utmoſt ſtretch of his hopes and of his wiſhes extended to the following points: full aſſurance that, on proper and practicable terms, his paſt ſins and even his future offences might be forgiven; a clear and accurate delineation of the path in which he ought to walk; the promiſe of Divine help to aſſiſt him in following that path, and in regaining it if he ſhould go aſtray; and the certain inheritance, if he ſhould prove obedient, of a life of happineſs beyond the grave. All theſe

points are offered and ascertained in the Christian Revelation. Do these facts bear no witness to the truth of Christianity?

III. The truths which the New Testament reveals or confirms respecting the Deity, and the lessons of morality which it teaches, are such as thoroughly to accord with the expectations and conclusions which reason, unprejudiced and enlightened, would form. And thus the sacred book approves itself worthy of God to that faculty which he has bestowed upon us, that it might be, subordinately to Revelation, our constant guide. The power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God are manifest in his works. His moral government of the world, his love of virtue, his abhorrence of guilt, were evinced, as St. Paul teaches us (*a*), even to the Gentile nations by the frame and administration of the universe. And as virtue and vice did not appear to be regularly and fully rewarded or punished under his moral government in the present

(*a*) Rom. i. 18—21.

life; a preſumption thence aroſe that another ſtage of exiſtence remained behind, in which human actions ſhould receive the recompence which they had ſeverally deſerved. Take the Chriſtian Scriptures into your hands; and behold all thoſe ſuggeſtions of reaſon eſtabliſhed, illuſtrated, and expanded to perfection. Behold all the duties which a creature ſuch as man can owe to God; piety, devotion, prayer, praiſe and thankſgiving, cheerful reſignation, patient confidence, grateful obedience, reverent fear, habitual, ſupreme, and unſhaken love; deſcribed in terms the moſt preciſe, inculcated in language the moſt energetic, recommended by motives the moſt perſuaſive, and enforced by ſanctions the moſt awful. Conſider in the next place the inſtructions delivered in that ſacred volume reſpecting the moral obligations owing from man to man. Hear it ſumming up the whole of that diviſion of human duties in the ſimple and univerſally applicable injunction, to love your neighbour as yourſelf. Hear it aboliſhing all the narrow diſtinctions, and

cutting

cutting off all the pretences and evaſions which ignorance, and pride, and enmity, are perpetually labouring to eſtabliſh; by declaring, that in the term neighbour every individual of the human race is comprehended. Hear it illuſtrating, by a variety of details, the import of its univerſal precept, in exhortations to juſtice, to mercy, to forgiveneſs of injuries, to unfailing kindneſs, meekneſs, gentleneſs, peace, and purity, and in the ſtrongeſt denunciations againſt the oppoſite vices: and anticipating tranſgreſſions in their very ſource, by proclaiming that the wiſh to commit ſin is in effect the commiſſion of it; that ſanctity, uprightneſs, and purity of thought, no leſs than of word and action, are indiſpenſably neceſſary to every one who ſeeks ſalvation through Chriſt. A tree is known by its fruits. A ſyſtem of doctrines thus in every particular worthy of God could come from God only (*b*).

IV. Look

(*b*) In Dr. Paley's View of the Evidences of Chriſtianity, a work which, on account of its general and very

IV. Look in the next place into the character of the teacher of this religion, Jeſus Chriſt. Conſider him in his public miniſtry, and in his private retirement; in his actions and his diſcourſes, his miracles and his ſufferings. Compare the piety, the morality, the unbounded love of God and

great excellence, I wiſh ſtrongly to recommend to univerſal attention: the chapter which treats of the morality of the Goſpel, though abounding in judicious obſervations, appears to me in ſeveral material points liable to juſt objection. It is indeed the general merit of the work which makes me feel obliged by motives of duty to ſuggeſt an eſpecial caution to the reader with reſpect to the particular chapter in queſtion. That I may give, as I ought to do, ſome reaſon for this caution, it ſeems neceſſary to obſerve, without dwelling on other points, that Dr. Paley's account of the morality of the Goſpel is radically influenced by the equally falſe and dangerous ſtandard of morals, general expediency, adopted by him, under an improved form, from its original aſſertor, Mr. Hume: that it is deteriorated by a ſtudied diſtinction wholly unwarrantable, and if unwarrantable, extremely pernicious, between public and private morality; and by a limitation ſubjoined to certain directions of our Saviour, a limitation unſupported by argument, and completely overthrown (vol. ii. p. 110. 1ſt edition) by the very firſt of the texts brought forward to ſupport it: "out of the heart proceed evil "thoughts, *murders*, &c."—And ſee the preceding paragraph.

of

of man, which he inculcated on his disciples, with his own unvarying practice. Ask yourself whether he, who taught and who practised such a religion, could be less than the son of God (c)?

V. The facts related in the Gospels and the Acts receive confirmation from the accounts incidentally given by Pagan historians who lived about the same period. It is not to be expected that the Roman writers, who held the Jews in supreme contempt, and in consequence of that contempt take little notice of the internal affairs of this people, should throw much light on the details of the Gospel history, or of the progress of the Christian religion. The religion they regarded as a sect of Judaism; and did not give themselves the trouble of making any inquiries concerning it. The little, however, which they do say relative to the subject, has its im-

(c) I forbear to enlarge in this place on the character of our Saviour, as that subject will afterwards be treated in a distinct chapter.

portance;

portance; and is the unſuſpected teſtimony of enemies. Tacitus expreſsly aſcribes the riſe of the Chriſtians to Chriſt; whom he alſo affirms to have been put to death by Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea. Suetonius repreſents the Chriſtians, whom he confounds with the Jews, as raiſing tumults in Rome at the inſtigation of Chriſt, (Chreſtus, of whoſe death he ſeems to have been ignorant,) and as baniſhed on that account from the city by the emperor Claudius. Amidſt the want of accurate intelligence which the hiſtorian here manifeſts, he unconſciouſly bears atteſtation to the truth of the book of the Acts of the Apoſtles; which records the circumſtance, that "Claudius had commanded all Jews "to depart from Rome (*d*)." The rapid progreſs of Chriſtianity and the oppoſition it experienced, which the ſame book deſcribes, are alſo corroborated by both theſe hiſtorians, and likewiſe by Pliny. Tacitus, ſpeaking of Chriſtianity, avers that this "deteſtable ſuperſtition," an appellation

(*d*) Acts, xviii. 2.

from

from which a judgement may be formed of his knowledge of its doctrines and morality, had not only overſpread Judea where it originated, but had alſo extended itſelf to Rome; and relates, that a "vaſt multitude" of Chriſtians was condemned there. Suetonius corroborates this relation by mentioning the perſecution (his expreſſion is, the puniſhment) of the Chriſtians at Rome by Nero. Pliny, in his memorable letter to the emperor Trajan, deſcribes Bithynia as ſo filled with Chriſtians, both in the towns and the villages, that a general deſertion of the Pagan temples and worſhip had taken place; and ſtates himſelf as ſending to execution all perſons who were brought before him on the charge of being of this religion, and avowed themſelves to be ſo. All theſe accounts, it may be added, ſupport in a manner equally ſtrong the truth of the Goſpels, in which our Saviour repeatedly forewarns his diſciples of the perſecutions that awaited them; and of the epiſtles likewiſe, in which St. Paul and the

other ſacred writers ſpeak of thoſe perſecutions as then actually taking place.

VI. It is impoſſible to ſuppoſe with any ſhadow of reaſon that the apoſtles, in preaching Chriſtianity, were deceived themſelves as to the truth of the religion which they taught. How was it poſſible that they could be deceived? They did not take up their doctrine from hearſay, or from written documents; in either of which caſes there might have been opportunity for fraud or error to have inſinuated itſelf. They were convinced by the long experience of their own ſenſes. They were the conſtant and familiar companions of Jeſus Chriſt. His life and actions were thoroughly known to them. His inſtructions they received from his own lips; in public and in private; before his reſurrection, and after it. Of his numerous miracles they were eye-witneſſes. The miracles too were of ſuch a ſort, that the diſciples could not be miſtaken in judging as to their reality. Whether men acknowledged to have

have been blind even from their birth became poſſeſſed of ſight; whether hearing was reſtored to the deaf, ſoundneſs to the lame, life to the dead: theſe were facts concerning which the apoſtles, who were ſpectators, could entertain no doubts. If ſuch deeds as theſe, performed too in various places, in the face of day, of multitudes, and of enemies, had been deceits and mere pretences to miraculous power; the impoſture muſt have been detected inſtantly. The object of the miracle remained there to be examined; and was examined, as we know, by the adverſaries of Chriſt, whenever occaſion offered, with ſufficient ſtrictneſs. Examination might always take place, and would naturally take place if any doubt ſubſiſted, by the diſciples themſelves. They aſſociated, as well as Chriſt himſelf, with Lazarus, who had been raiſed from the dead. They aſſociated for forty days with Chriſt after his own reſurrection. Could they be ignorant whether Lazarus or Chriſt were really riſen? Could they be ignorant whether they actually

tually ſaw Chriſt aſcend into heaven, after giving them his final benediction? Could they be ignorant whether two angels ſtood by them, on the diſappearance of our Saviour among the clouds, and told them that He ſhould again viſibly return from heaven to earth at the end of the world? Could they be ignorant whether, on the day of Pentecoſt, the Holy Ghoſt did actually come upon them, according to the promiſe of their departed Lord; whether they were actually able from that moment to ſpeak various languages, with which they had until that moment been unacquainted? All this, and much more that might be added on the ſame head, is utterly impoſſible.

VII. But though the ſuppoſition, that the apoſtles were themſelves deceived, muſt be given up as untenable; might not they knowingly deceive the people? This new ſuppoſition implies three things. It implies that the apoſtles were wicked enough to preach a religion which they knew to be falſe:

falſe: that they had ſufficient inducements to be guilty of this impoſition: and that they could carry on ſuch an impoſition without detection. Let us inveſtigate each of thoſe points ſeparately. Firſt then with regard to the wickedneſs of the apoſtles. Not conſidering, or not regarding, the charges of wickedneſs which might be advanced againſt them in future ages; they have drawn up no formal characters of each other. Nor is the omiſſion material. For to thoſe who ſee other grounds for truſting the apoſtles, ſuch characters would have been ſuperfluous; and by thoſe who charge them with wickedneſs, would not have been believed. You muſt therefore collect their characters from the incidental notices of the conduct of the individuals, which you find diſperſed in the Scriptures. What then do you find recorded in the Scriptures concerning them? You find many inſtances of human frailty. You find an extreme unwillingneſs to relinquiſh the ambitious hopes which they had cheriſhed of worldly power and grandeur under the kingdom of

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the Meſſiah. You find a rooted attachment to the prejudices of their countrymen againſt Samaritans and Gentiles. You find a cowardly deſertion of their Lord and maſter in the hour of his affliction: and in the caſe of Peter, a repeated and blaſphemous denial of Jeſus Chriſt, for whom he had recently affirmed himſelf ready to die. Is the plain and unvarniſhed confeſſion given by themſelves of theſe and other inſtances of infirmity a mark of wickedneſs? Is it not a token of candour and integrity? Is not their openneſs, in recording to poſterity what they had done amiſs, an argument that what incidentally appears to their credit in the ſame writings may be truſted? If you believe the account of St. Peter's denial, and all its aggravations; will you not credit the account contained in the ſame books of his bitter and permanent repentance? If you believe the diſciples when they tell you, that on the apprehenſion of Chriſt they all forſook him and fled; and that on firſt being informed of his reſurrection, they regarded the report as an idle

tale:

tale: will you not believe them when they aſſert their own ſubſequent conviction, their intercourſe with their maſter after his return to life, and their commiſſion from him to go and baptiſe all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt? To theſe conſiderations let me add another ſuggeſted by the doctrines which they taught. The religion which they preached was undeniably a religion of conſummate holineſs and purity. They went from province to province, from country to country, inculcating the love and the fear of God, abhorrence of ſin, and the perpetual practice of integrity, ſincerity, truth, and every other ſimilar moral obligation. And this doctrine, it ſeems, they laboriouſly preached day after day and year after year, conſcious during every moment that their own conduct was an uninterrupted ſcene of deliberate falſehood and hypocriſy! Is there the faintest appearance of credibility in the ſuppoſition? What could induce villains to preach virtue? Nothing, you reply, except to gain by it. Gain

by it! Let us enquire then, in the ſecond place, what the apoſtles were to gain by preaching Chriſtianity. Upon the preſent ſuppoſition, that they wickedly preached it, knowing it to be an impoſture, they of courſe looked for no advantage in the next world as a reward for their preaching. Their reward, whatever it might be, muſt be ſought in the preſent life. What then did they expect to gain in the preſent life? They expected to gain what they did gain; perſecution, ſcorn, and miſery. "The "ſervant is not greater than his Lord. If "they have perſecuted me, they will alſo "perſecute you. Becauſe ye are not of "the world, therefore the world hateth "you. Ye ſhall be betrayed both by pa-"rents and brethren and kinſfolks and "friends. They will deliver you up to "the councils; and they will ſcourge you "in their ſynagogues. They ſhall lay "hands on you, and perſecute you, de-"livering you up to the ſynagogues and "into priſons, being brought before kings "and rulers for my name's ſake. They

" ſhall deliver you up to be afflicted, and " ſhall kill you; and ye ſhall be hated " of all nations for my name's ſake. The " time cometh, that he that killeth you " will think that he doeth God ſervice. " Theſe things have I told you, that when " the time ſhall come, ye may remember " that I told you of them (*e*)." Such was the earthly recompence which our Saviour had taught his diſciples to expect. Conſult Tacitus, and Suetonius, and Pliny; conſult the Acts of the Apoſtles, and the Epiſtles, eſpecially thoſe of St. Paul; and you will find that theſe expectations were not diſappointed. " If in this life only we have " hope in Chriſt," ſaid St. Paul moſt truly, of himſelf and the apoſtles and the other Chriſtians of his day; and in this life only the apoſtles, if they were deceivers, could have hope; " If in this life only we have " hope in Chriſt, we are of all men the " moſt miſerable (*f*)." The expectations

(*e*) Luke, xxi. 12. 16. Matt. x. 17. xxiv. 9. John, xv. 19, 20. xvi. 2. 4.

(*f*) Cor. xv. 19. and ſee iv. 9. 13.

of the apoſtles for their reward were manifeſtly directed beforehand to a better life, and to that alone. And that ſingle circumſtance is ſufficient to prove that they were not deceivers. Thirdly, if they had been deceivers, detection would have ſtared them in the face, and would have been inevitable. If their whole narrative was replete with falſehoods, they were falſehoods which the inhabitants of Judea could not but know to be ſuch. If Chriſt did not fulfil the predictions which the apoſtles affirmed him to have accompliſhed; if he did not perform the miracles which the apoſtles affirmed him to have wrought; all this the Jews muſt have known. Their willingneſs to diſcover fraud in the apoſtles, and to make the moſt of any diſcovery, will not be doubted. They were as eager to expoſe, as to ſtone and to crucify. But from the Acts we find that they admitted the miraculous facts averred by the apoſtles, and endeavoured to explain them away. The premiſes they allowed; but drew through bigotry and prejudice an erroneous con-

cluſion. Yet even of theſe bigotted and prejudiced men thouſands were converted almoſt immediately after the aſcenſion of Chriſt. Had there been fraud, detection muſt inſtantly have followed. And the fraud, detected and exploded in Judea, could never have hoped to gain a proſelyte among the Gentiles.

VIII. The difficulties which Chriſtianity had to encounter from its very commencement and during its progreſs were ſuch, that its prevalence could reſult only from the irreſiſtible force of truth. Conſider under what unfavourable circumſtances, as to worldly advantages, it was introduced. Jeſus Chriſt, the founder of the religion, appeared in the moſt humble ſtation of life. Without rank, or wealth, or friends, known only as "the carpenter, the ſon of Ma-"ry (*g*)," and as the inhabitant of Nazareth, a place proverbially in ſuch diſrepute that the mere fact of his belonging to it was thought almoſt concluſive againſt

(*g*) Mark, vi. 3.

his pretenſions to be the Meſſiah (*b*); he announced himſelf as the promiſed Saviour of the world. The diſciples whom he ſelected to be his inſtruments in this undertaking were, like himſelf, poor, deſtitute, and diſregarded: and one at leaſt of them was of an occupation which rendered thoſe who purſued it ſingularly odious. In propounding his new religion to his countrymen he enjoyed none of thoſe favourable circumſtances, he uſed none of thoſe arts, to which the authors of new doctrines have ſo often been indebted, and to which Mahomet in particular owed his whole ſucceſs. He did not begin his undertaking in a country divided into many petty and disjointed ſects: but among a people united in attachment to a venerable eſtabliſhment armed with no ſmall ſhare of civil power, as well as of eccleſiaſtical authority. He had neither the inclination nor the means

(*b*) Philip findeth Nathanael, and ſaith unto him; we have found him of whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jeſus of Nazareth, the ſon of Joſeph. And Nathanael ſaid unto him; can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? John, i. 45, 46.

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of promoting the diffuſion of his doctrine by force of arms. He neither permitted vicious indulgences nor promiſed licentious rewards to his adherents. He flattered no ſect, however powerful: he attached himſelf to no party, however numerous: he diſguiſed no truths, however unpalatable: he ſpared no criminals, however formidable and malignant. The Phariſees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, were alike the objects of his ſevereſt reprehenſion. Towards the common people he uſed no ſpecies of undue conciliation. Their prejudices in favour of a temporal Meſſiah he diſcountenanced: their offers to make him their king he ſteadily rejected: their intereſted attendance in hopes of being fed by a repetition of the miracle of the loaves and fiſhes he pointedly and publickly reproved. So little hold had he obtained on their affections, that after he had employed between three and four years in his miniſtry, they eagerly coöperated with their rulers in procuring his death. He died, forſaken by his followers; as a malefactor; and by

a mode of death, according to the opinion of the age and country, the moſt infamous. When the preaching of his doctrine was renewed, after his aſcenſion, by his diſciples, labouring under the weight of the odium which had overtaken their maſter; it was renewed with additions which rendered it ſtill more hateful to the Jews. The apoſtles, beſides charging them with the innocent blood of Jeſus, and affirming his reſurrection from the grave, and his exaltation to the right hand of God; not only announced in plainer terms than he had employed the abolition of the Moſaic rites and ordinances, ſo dear to the hearts of the whole Jewiſh people; but they ſpeedily proclaimed a doctrine, if poſſible, ſtill more obnoxious, to which, in conſequence of his own excluſive miſſion to the Jews, he had but ſlightly and ſeldom alluded, the annihilation of all the peculiar privileges of the Jewiſh race, and the free admiſſion of the abhorred Samaritans and Gentiles to every bleſſing of the Chriſtian covenant. The active oppoſition, the unrelenting enmity and vengeance, with which

which the Jews perſecuted Chriſtianity and its teachers, were correſpondent to the virulent deteſtation which theſe tenets were adapted to excite. When the apoſtles turned to the Romans, the ſovereign maſters of every country recorded in the Acts as having been the ſcene of apoſtolical labours; were they likely to experience a more favourable reception than they had found among their own countrymen? The very circumſtance of their being Jews enſured to them at once the averſion and the contempt of the Roman world. Perſonally odious, they were rendered more odious by their doctrine: a doctrine which not only alarmed, by being miſconceived, the jealous ſuſpicions of the Romans concerning a king, a rival of Cæſar, whom they expected to ariſe in Judæa (*i*); but declared

(*i*) This prevailing expectation is recorded by Tacitus (Hiſt. lib. v. c. 13.) and by Suetonius (lib. viii. c. 4.). And of the jealouſy which it occaſioned among the Romans ample proof is afforded by the conduct of Pilate,

Matt,

declared war to extermination againſt every deity of the Pantheon, againſt every one of the idolatrous ſacrifices, rites, and inſtitutions, public or domeſtic, in which the Romans had been trained from their childhood; and to which they aſcribed the gradual riſe of Rome during more than ſeven centuries, from an obſcure village to the rank of Imperial metropolis of the earth. The numerous and ſanguinary perſecutions, which the apoſtles and the early Chriſtians endured from the Romans, bear indiſputable teſtimony to the abhorrence with which that people regarded and oppoſed Chriſtianity. Yet in the face of univerſal oppoſition Chriſtianity marched forward from conqueſt to conqueſt; and before the end of three centuries from the death of Chriſt reigned triumphant over the whole Roman empire. "Thus mightily grew the word of God,

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Matt. xxvii. 11. John, xix. 12—16. and by the proceedings at Theſſalonica related Acts, xvii. ſee particularly ver. 7.

"and

"and prevailed." What could have thus prevailed, but the word of God?

IX. There remain two other leading heads of argument ſtrongly confirming the truth of Chriſtianity, which, at the ſame time that I paſs over ſome ſubordinate yet not unimportant conſiderations tending to the ſame concluſion, muſt not be omitted. One of theſe ariſes from the completion of many prophecies delivered in the New Teſtament; particularly from the fulfilment of thoſe which concern the Chriſtian church, and the apoſtacy and uſurpations of Papal Rome. The other is drawn from the numerous coincidences reciprocally ſubſiſting between the ſeveral Epiſtles of St. Paul, and between thoſe epiſtles and the book of Acts: coincidences which, while they prove themſelves beyond diſpute on cloſe examination, are ſo little obvious to common obſervers that it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe they were deſignedly inſerted, or that they were produced otherwiſe than by the uniformity of truth. The advantages, however,

ever, of unfolding theſe two heads of argument in detail I am obliged to forego: as the ſtatement and inveſtigation of particulars requiſite to enable the reader to ſatisfy himſelf reſpecting their validity would inevitably occupy a ſpace diſproportioned to the nature and ſize of the preſent work (*k*).

Such and ſo many are the diſtinct lines of proof, by which the truth of the Chriſtian religion is eſtabliſhed! So provident has been the goodneſs of the Ruler of the Univerſe in confirming by unanſwerable arguments, all concurring, like the rays of a circle, in one central point; yet differing in their nature, and thus the more adapted to make impreſſion on different minds, the

(*k*) On the firſt of theſe heads of argument the reader is referred to Biſhop Hurd's twelve Sermons on Prophecy: to Biſhop Newton's Diſſertations on the Prophecies; and to other writers on the ſubject: and on the ſecond to Dr. Paley's Horæ Paulinæ; a work in which it was originally brought forward, and is illuſtrated with great acuteneſs and felicity.

ſacred

ſacred Goſpel of his Son! Why then are there thouſands, enabled by their attainments and opportunities fully to examine and accurately to appreciate the evidences of Chriſtianity, who doubt or diſbelieve its truth? The cauſes are obvious. Theſe unhappy men do not enquire into the ſubject; or they enquire not with ſuitable diſpoſitions of heart. Immerſed in the purſuits of ambition, of profit, or of pleaſure; puffed up with arrogant opinions of their own knowledge and of their own virtue; revolting at the humiliating doctrine that human nature is corrupt, and in need of an atoning Redeemer; accuſtomed to diſdain whatever they think it poſſible to claſs among common prejudices and vulgar ſuperſtitions; hearing of the prevalence in different times and places of different religions, all of which they know cannot be true, but all of which they conclude may equally be falſe: prepoſſeſſed againſt Chriſtianity by difficulties which they imagine it to contain; by witty cavils and objections

aimed

aimed againſt it, which they take for granted are juſt; and by a cauſe ſtill more to be regretted, the unchriſtian lives of many of its profeſſors; and above all, averſe to abandon thoſe vicious principles and habits, which they perceive to be utterly prohibited by the Goſpel, and to acknowledge the certainty of that puniſhment, which, if they admit the Goſpel to be true, they muſt neceſſarily own to await themſelves ſhould they continue in their ſins: actuated by ſome of theſe, or ſimilar prepoſſeſſions, they refuſe to examine into the evidences of the Chriſtian religion; or they examine ſlightly, partially, uncandidly, with minds prediſpoſed to find objections, to take offence, and to condemn. The faith which Chriſtianity claims is not credulity; but aſſent founded on willing enquiry and rational conviction. "The people of Berea," ſaith the evangeliſt, "were more noble than thoſe "of Theſſalonica, in that *they received the* "*word with all readineſs of mind, and* "*ſearched the Scriptures daily whether thoſe*

"*things*

" *things were ſo* (*l*)." " Be ready always," ſaith the apoſtle, " to give an anſwer to " every one that aſketh you *a reaſon* of the " hope that is in you (*m*)." But in all enquiries reſpecting religion, as with reſpect to every other ſubject, the enquirer, if he would really diſcover truth, muſt examine with ſerioufneſs, with patience, with humility; with a heart ſincerely diſpoſed to embrace whatever he ſhall diſcover to be true; and with a reverent deſire that the Supreme Being, who is the fountain of knowledge, may lead him into all truth. If he examines without theſe diſpoſitions, what can be expected but that his examination ſhould confirm him in his prejudices and errors? " He that will do the will of " God," ſaith our Saviour, " ſhall know of " the doctrine, whether it be of God (*n*)." Have you any doubt as to the truth of Chriſtianity? Let your heart be prepared to obey whatever Chriſtianity, if true, ſhall

(*l*) Acts, xvii. 11. (*m*) 1 Pet. iii. 15.
(*n*) John, vii. 17.

be

be found to command: and you will not conclude a patient enquiry without being convinced of its truth. But "keep thy "heart with all diligence: for out of it "are the iſſues of life (*o*)."

(*o*) Proverbs, iv. 23.

CHAP. VII.

ON THE LEADING DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

I. THE being and the attributes of God are truths, which lie at the root of all religion. "He that cometh to God, must believe "that He is; and that He is a rewarder "of them that diligently seek him (*a*)." They are truths to the discovery of which the Heathen world was perfectly competent. In the days of Pagan darkness, when the light of the Divine countenance seemed as it were withdrawn from mankind, God, saith the apostle, "left not "himself without witness; in that he did "good, and gave us rain from Heaven, "and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts "with food and gladness (*b*)." Why is it

(*a*) Hebrews, xi. 6. (*b*) Acts, xiv. 17.

that St. Paul pronounces the idolatrous and abandoned Gentiles inexcuſable? "Be-
"cauſe that which may be known of God
"is manifeſt in them: for God hath
"ſhewed it unto them. For the inviſible
"things of Him from the creation of the
"world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood
"by the things that are made; even his
"eternal power and Godhead: ſo that they
"are without excuſe, becauſe that when
"they knew God," (or might thus have known him had they been willing,) "they
"glorified Him not as God (*c*)" by purity of worſhip and holineſs of life. The eternal exiſtence, and the attributes of the Deity, his omnipreſence, his infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, his holineſs, his juſtice, and his other unbounded perfections, were inculcated on the Jews by expreſs revelation; and are deſcribed in the ſublimeſt language by the ſacred writers, eſpecially by the prophets, in the Old Teſtament. Theſe fundamental truths neceſ-

(*c*) Romans, i. 19, 20.

ſarily form the ground-work of Chriſtianity. They are however ſo obvious in their nature, and ſo generally recogniſed, that to dilate upon them is not requiſite. I proceed therefore to conſider ſuch of the other leading doctrines of the New Teſtament as are either peculiar to the Chriſtian religion, or have received from that religion ſuch additional illuſtration as to require to be ſeparately noticed. Theſe doctrines may be compriſed under four general heads; which will be arranged in the order according to which they may be moſt conveniently diſcuſſed. The firſt will relate to the corruption of human nature: the ſecond to the reſurrection, and the future judgement: the third to the nature and office of Chriſt: the fourth to the nature and office of the Holy Spirit.

II. The depravity of human nature has already been unavoidably noticed in ſpeaking of the fall of man, by which it was produced. We learn from the book of Geneſis, that our firſt parents, deluded by the

evil ſpirit, who availed himſelf of the inſtrumentality of the ſerpent to accompliſh their ruin, concurred in diſobeying the ſole prohibition which their Creator had impoſed as the trial of their obedience. By this rebellion againſt their Sovereign and Benefactor they loſt, together with their title to immortality, their primeval innocence: they loſt their purity and holineſs, the image of God in which they had been created. Sin, the forerunner of death, entered into the world, and clave inſeparably to fallen man. The children of Adam were born "in his own image," no longer that of God. The tide of wickedneſs, ſhewing its early power by the murder of Abel, and gradually ſpreading itſelf until it had abſorbed in its groſſeſt impurities the whole race of man, Noah and his family excepted, proved in the antediluvian world, that from a corrupted origin nothing but what was corrupt could proceed. After the flood the antecedent depravity remained unaltered. "The imagination of man's "heart" ſtill continued "evil from his

" youth." At the time of the call of Abraham, almoſt before the eyes of Noah were cloſed, and long before the death of his ſon Shem, idolatry and its attendant enormities had enſnared almoſt all mankind. The hiſtory of the Jews, the choſen people of God, inſtructed by an immediate and ſpecial revelation from Heaven; ſeparated by rites and uſages ſcarcely leſs than by religious knowledge from the contagion of ſurrounding guilt; excited from time to time to ſtedfaſtneſs in their duty by miracles, by prophets, by unmerited mercies and by ſignal judgements; yet, under all theſe appeals to their underſtandings, their gratitude, their hopes, and their fears, obſtinately and irreclaimably wicked; the hiſtory of this people from their origin to their diſperſion by the Romans is no other than a practical and unbroken exemplification of the native corruption of the human heart. The blindneſs and flagitiouſneſs of the ancient Gentile world which, enjoying much fainter gleams of religious light, became proportionally immerſed in blacker

depths of ignorance and profligacy; the continuance of the ſame ſtate of darkneſs and guilt in regions not irradiated by revelation; the lamentable prevalence of wickedneſs among thoſe who enjoy the full light of the Goſpel; all theſe facts unite in atteſting and exemplifying the ſame corruption.

To this corruption the Chriſtian Scriptures, in recording the wonders of that plan of redemption by which its fatal conſequences were to be removed, refer, directly or indirectly, on many occaſions, and in the cleareſt manner. It is indeed on that corruption that the whole plan of Chriſtianity is eſtabliſhed. We are therefore not ſurpriſed at the gloomy catalogue of crimes, which our Saviour deſcribes as proceeding from the human heart (*d*): nor at the enumeration given by St. Paul of the works of the fleſh (*e*), the works to which men are by nature prone. We are not ſurpriſed to hear this apoſtle affirming, "we have "proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they

(*d*) Matt. xv. 19. (*e*) Gal. v. 19. 21.

"are

" are all under ſin: as it is written, There " is none righteous, no not one: There is " none that underſtandeth, there is none " that ſeeketh after God: they are all " gone out of the way; they are altogether " become unprofitable; there is none that " doeth good, no not one (*f*)." We are not ſurpriſed to hear him affirming, " I " know, that in me, that is, in my fleſh. " dwelleth no good thing: for to will is " preſent with me; but how to perform " that which is good I find not. For the " good that I would, I do not; but the evil " which I would not, that I do (*g*)." Nor are we ſurpriſed when he avows concerning himſelf and his Epheſian converts, that they alſo were formerly " dead in " treſpaſſes and ſins according to the " courſe of this world, fulfilling the luſts " of the fleſh, and of the mind; and were, " by nature, children of wrath, even as " others (*h*)" To accumulate ſimilar paſſages is needleſs.

(*f*) Rom. iii. 10, &c. (*g*) Rom. vii. 18, &c.
(*h*) Epheſ. ii. 1, &c.

In this doctrine of the natural corruption of the human heart, taken in conjunction with another doctrine, on which the Scriptures are no leſs explicit; that the remedy for this corruption is provided by the Almighty not as a debt owing to man, but as the free bounty of Divine grace; certain perſons have imagined that they have diſcovered difficulties not to be obviated conſiſtently with ſome of the attributes of God. If you feel a doubt of this kind ſpringing in your breaſt, remember the infinite diſtance between yourſelf and your Maker. Remember how little qualified you are, in conſequence of that diſtance, to criticiſe or to appreciate the details of his plans of governing the univerſe; plans of which you perceive ſo very ſmall a part. Remember that in every one of his works which you inveſtigate there are depths to you unfathomable. Remember that the corruption of human nature is a fact demonſtrated by experience. Suppoſe Chriſtianity to be falſe, or never to have been revealed: the ſtate of human nature remains unaltered.

unaltered. That doctrine therefore, let it inevitably bring with it whatever difficulties it may, brings none which preſs harder upon Chriſtianity than upon any other religion. Conſult the Scriptures. If you there find the exiſtence of this corruption unequivocally declared; be ſatisfied that its exiſtence is perfectly compatible with the juſtice, with the mercy, with every attribute of God. If you find a further and unequivocal declaration, that the remedy for this corruption and its conſequences is a free gift, not a debt, on the part of the Deity: be ſatisfied that this arrangement likewiſe is entirely conſiſtent with all his perfections. You already know, or may know, from the dealings of God with men, what is ſufficient to convince you that, although "his ways are unſearchable and "his judgements paſt finding out (*i*);" although "clouds and darkneſs are round "about him; yet righteouſneſs and judge-"ment are the habitation of his "throne (*k*)."

(*i*) Romans, xi. 33. (*k*) Pſalm xcvii. 2.

The

The influence of this original depravation of nature affects every individual at every period of his life. It is an internal enemy always at work; but operating in the most dangerous manner, when the concurrence of favourable circumstances arms it with additional force. It perverts the inclinations of men; darkens the understanding; adds strength to passion, efficacy to temptation; disposes the heart to evil, indisposes it to good. Would you learn to place a true value on the blessings of redemption through Christ; on that dispensation which is revealed as the only method by which the Divine wisdom hath appointed, that the fallen descendants of Adam should be restored to the image and favour of God? Consider the corrupt nature of which you partake; the guilt, and the punishment with which, but for the grace of God in the Christian dispensation of mercy, you would in consequence of that corrupt nature be overwhelmed.

III. The prolongation of human existence beyond the grave is a subject which in

in all ages has exerciſed the underſtandings, the hopes, and the fears of mankind. To ſerious enquirers there could not but appear a conſiderable probability, anterior to the light of revelation, that man would ſurvive the ſtroke of death. That mere matter ſhould be poſſeſſed of thought, of imagination, of reaſoning powers, of choice, and ſpontaneous agency, was a poſition ſeemingly incomprehenſible. Hence it was juſtly inferred that the ſoul was diſtinct from the body; and, if diſtinct, not very likely to be involved in the deſtruction of the frame which it inhabited. The ſtrong repugnance to annihilation implanted in human nature by the hand of God, formed a preſumption that annihilation was not deſigned to be the lot of humanity. The capacity of progreſſive improvement in the faculties of the mind, the ardent deſires of the ſoul for degrees of knowledge and happineſs unattainable on earth, excited a reaſonable hope that a ſtate of being yet remained, in which thoſe faculties might be advanced, and thoſe deſires gratified,

gratified, to perfection. Another and ſtill more weighty argument could not eſcape notice. That the world was under a moral Governor was apparent: yet that virtue and vice were not uniformly or accurately recompenſed with preſent happineſs and preſent miſery was undeniable. Hence it ſeemed an almoſt neceſſary deduction, that complete retribution was reſerved for another ſcene of exiſtence. All theſe arguments however were only preſumptions. They were highly probable conjectures. But in a matter of ſuch extreme importance the mind could not repoſe itſelf with ſatisfactory aſſurance on ſpeculations. The natural and moral arguments for the immortality of the ſoul were alſo too abſtruſe to make a general or a durable impreſſion on the vulgar. To philoſophers themſelves they carried no permanent conviction (*l*). Pluto, and Minos, and Tartarus, and Elyſium,

(*l*) Neſcio quomodo, dum lego, aſſentior: cum poſui librum, et mecum ipſe de immortalitate animorum cœpi cogitare, aſſenſio omnis illa elabitur. This is the language even of Cicero; Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. i. c. 11. In another

ſium, afforded imagery, and alluſions, and epiſodes to poets: but reached not the underſtanding, nor influenced the heart. Among the Jews, in the early periods of their hiſtory, indications that a life after the concluſion of this was expected are few and obſcure. In later times thoſe traces became more numerous and more diſtinct. Yet even in the days of our Saviour one of the principal ſects, the Sadducees, denied a future exiſtence; and does not appear to have been rendered generally unpopular to the Jewiſh nation by its doctrine. How therefore were the minds of men to be ſet at reſt, but by a free communication of the truth, in terms which could not be miſunderſtood, and from authority which could not be queſtioned? The Goſpel has made this communication. "It has brought "life and immortality to light (*m*)." It

another place, ſpeaking of the ſame ſubject, he deſcribes himſelf as "dubitans, circumſpectans, hæſitans, tanquam "ratis in mari immenſo vehitur." c. 30.

(*m*) 2 Tim. i. 10.

has

has lifted up the veil which hung over eternity. It has revealed to man, that in the unknown and unbounded realms of Omnipotence an habitation is reſerved for him; an habitation of bliſs, or of miſery, proportioned to his conduct upon earth. It has revealed to him that all his thoughts, words, and actions, ſhall be examined in the preſence of aſſembled men and angels on the great day appointed for judgement, before the throne of Jeſus Chriſt. It has revealed to man that his mortal body ſhall be raiſed from the grave; ſhall be reunited to his ſoul; ſhall be rendered, like his ſoul, immortal; ſhall be partaker with his ſoul of puniſhment, or of reward. "As the "Father hath life in Himſelf, ſo hath he "given to the Son to have life in Himſelf: "and hath given him authority to exe- "cute judgement alſo, becauſe He is the "Son of Man (*n*):" becauſe, being the Son of God, he vouchſafed to become the Son of Man, and to take upon himſelf the per-

(*n*) John, v. 26, 27.

ſonal

ſonal experience of human infirmities (*o*). "The Father judgeth no man, but hath "committed all judgement unto the Son: "that all men may honour the Son, even "as they honour the Father (*p*)."—"The "hour is coming, in which all that are in "the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall "come forth: they that have done good, "unto the reſurrection of life; and they "that have done evil, unto the reſurrection "of damnation (*q*)."—"The Son of Man "ſhall come in the glory of his Father "with his angels: and then he ſhall re-"ward every man according to his "works (*r*)."—"When the Son of Man "ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy "angels with him; then ſhall he ſit upon "the throne of his glory, and before him "ſhall be gathered all nations: and he ſhall "ſeparate them one from another, as a "ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the "goats. And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his "right hand; but the goats on his left.

(*o*) Heb. iv. 15.
(*p*) John, v. 22.
(*q*) John, v. 28, 29.
(*r*) Matt. xvi. 27.

"Then

" Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on
" his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my
" Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
" you from the foundation of the world.—
" Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the
" left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed,
" into everlaſting fire, prepared for the
" devil and his angels.—And theſe ſhall go
" away into everlaſting puniſhment; but
" the righteous into life eternal (*s*)."—" We
" muſt all appear before the judgement-
" ſeat of Chriſt; that every one may receive
" the things done in his body, according
" to that he hath done, whether it be good
" or bad (*t*)."—" God ſhall judge the ſe-
" crets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, according
" to my Goſpel (*u*)."—" The Lord himſelf
" ſhall deſcend from heaven, with a ſhout,
" with the voice of the archangel, and with
" the trump of God (*v*)."—" For the trumpet
" ſhall ſound; and the dead ſhall be raiſed
" incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed.
" For this corruptible muſt put on incor-

(*s*) Matt. xxv. 31—34. 41. 46.
(*t*) 2 Cor. v. 10.
(*u*) Rom. ii. 16.
(*v*) 1 Theſſ. iv. 16.

" ruption;

"ruption: and this mortal muſt put on "immortality (*w*)." Conformable to theſe repreſentations was the prophetic viſion of the final judgement revealed to St. John. "I ſaw a great white throne, and Him that "ſat on it: from whoſe face the earth and "the heaven fled away; and there was "found no place for them. And I ſaw the "dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God. "And the books were opened: and an-"other book was opened, which is the "book of life: and the dead were judged "out of thoſe things which were written "in the books, according to their works. "And the ſea gave up the dead, which "were in it: and death and hell delivered "up the dead which were in them; and "they were judged, every man, according "to their works; and whoſoever was not "found written in the book of life, was "caſt into the lake of fire (*x*)."

The ſtate of happineſs, and the ſtate of miſery, ſeverally prepared for the righteous

(*w*) 1 Cor. xv. 52, 53. (*x*) Rev. xx. 11—15.

and the ungodly, are not described to us in detail: partly, we may presume, because a knowledge of them in detail would not have been advantageous to us during our mortal course: and partly, because the full comprehension of the bliss to be enjoyed by the glorified spirits of just men made perfect, and of the sufferings to be endured by those whose obstinate wickedness shall have involved them in destruction, is beyond the grasp of the present faculties of man. "Eye hath not seen," saith the apostle, "nor ear heard, neither hath it entered "into the heart of man to conceive, the "things which God hath prepared for "them that love him (y)." The same description, it is probable, might be applied to the punishments which await the wicked. With respect, however, to that happiness and that misery, two things are clear: that each is extreme; and that each is unchangeable. The rest is conveyed in general terms, adapted to impress on the

(y) 2 Cor. ii. 9.

heart

heart those momentous truths. The recompense of those who are received into happiness is denominated, "Glory, honour, immortality, eternal life (*z*); eternal salvation (*a*); the presence of the glory of God (*b*); a crown of righteousness (*c*); a crown of glory that fadeth not away (*d*); an exceeding and eternal weight of glory (*e*); an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in Heaven (*f*). The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (*g*). They can die no more; for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection (*h*). They shall be with Christ (*i*): they shall be for ever with the Lord (*k*); and be like Him, and see Him as he is (*l*), face to face (*m*).

(*z*) Rom. ii. 7.
(*a*) Heb. v. 9.
(*b*) Jude, 24.
(*c*) 2 Tim. iv. 8.
(*d*) 1 Pet. v. 4.
(*e*) 2 Cor. iv. 17.
(*f*) 1 Pet. i. 4.
(*g*) Matt. xiii. 43.
(*h*) Luke, xx. 36.
(*i*) John, xii. 26. xvii. 24.
(*k*) 1 Thes. iv. 17.
(*l*) 1 John, iii. 2.
(*m*) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

"There ſhall be no more death, neither "ſorrow, nor crying; neither ſhall there "be any more pain (*n*). And there ſhall "be no more curſe: for the throne of God "and the Lamb ſhall be" among the righteous. "And they ſhall ſee his face: the "Lord God giveth them light: and they "ſhall reign for ever and ever (*o*)." The future ſtate of the wicked is termed "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh (*p*): the lake which burneth with "fire and brimſtone (*q*): outer darkneſs, "and a furnace of fire, where ſhall be "weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of "teeth (*r*): everlaſting puniſhment, eternal "damnation (*s*): everlaſting deſtruction from "the preſence of the Lord and the glory "of his power (*t*): hell, where the worm "dieth not, and the fire is never quenched (*u*): the place of torment, day and "night, for ever and ever (*v*)."

(*n*) Rev. xxi. 4.
(*o*) Rev. xxii. 3—5.
(*p*) Rom. ii. 8, 9.
(*q*) Rev. xxi. 8.
(*r*) Mat. viii. 12. xiii. 42.
(*s*) Mat. xxv. 46. Mark, iii. 29.
(*t*) 2 Theſ. i. 9.
(*u*) Mark, ix. 43. 46. 48.
(*v*) Luke, xvi. 28. Rev. xx. 10.

IV. How

IV. How then is this happineſs to be attained, this miſery to be eſcaped, by a being like man, frail and prone to iniquity? The Scriptures anſwer the queſtion: by the grace of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. In the Scriptures this diſpenſation of mercy is unfolded. They reveal the nature and the office of Jeſus Chriſt.

The nature of this great Redeemer is deſcribed in language which proclaims him intitled not merely to our gratitude, our love, our reverence, our homage, but to our adoration. Many centuries before his appearance upon earth he was announced by Iſaiah under the denomination of "The "Mighty God, God with us (*w*)." The New Teſtament preſents him to the world in the ſame character. He is ſtyled "the "only begotten Son of God (*x*); the bright- "neſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs "image of his perſon (*y*); the image of "the inviſible God (*z*); the Word of

(*w*) Iſaiah, ix. 6. vii. 14. Mat. i. 23.
(*x*) John, iii. 16. (*y*) Heb. i. 3.
(*z*) Coloſ. i. 15.

" God (*a*); the Lord of Glory (*b*); the " true God, God manifeſted in the fleſh, " God over all bleſſed for ever (*c*); the " Word, who in the beginning was with " God, and was God (*d*)." By the Father himſelf he is expreſsly called God (*e*). Of himſelf he ſays, " I and my Father are " one (*f*)."—" Before Abraham was, I " am (*g*)." He commands his diſciples to baptiſe all nations in his name conjointly with that of the Father and of the Holy Ghoſt (*h*). He affirms that none knows the Father, but the Son: and that none knows the Son, but the Father (*i*). All the angels of God are commanded to worſhip him (*k*). In him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily (*l*). Adoration and prayer were addreſſed to him by St. Stephen; and at the very time when that

(*a*) Rev. xix. 13. (*b*) 1 Cor. ii. 8. Jas. i. 2.
(*c*) John, xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5. 1 John, v. 20. 1 Tim. iii. 16.
(*d*) John, i. 1. (*e*) Heb. i. 8.
(*f*) John, x. 30. and ſee 33.
(*g*) John, viii. 58. and compare Exod. iii. 14.
(*h*) Mat. xxviii. 19. (*i*) Mat. xi. 27.
(*k*) Heb i. 6. (*l*) Coloſ. ii. 9.

martyr

martyr was "full of the Holy Ghoſt (*m*)." He is repreſented in the book of Revelations as receiving univerſal worſhip in conjunction with the Father (*n*). His name ſtands united with that of the Father and the Holy Ghoſt in the apoſtolical benediction (*o*). He is characteriſed, and characteriſed by himſelf, when he appears to St. John, by the identical terms, expreſſive of eternal exiſtence and perfection, which are at the very ſame time applied, and had alſo been applied in the Old Teſtament, as characteriſtic of God the Father (*p*). Further; to this great and glorious Saviour, the ſecond perſon in the Divine Trinity, the immediate agency of creating and preſerving the world is unequivocally and repeatedly aſcribed. It is he by whom God "made the worlds (*q*)." It is he who "upholdeth all things by the "word of his power (*r*)."—"All things

(*m*) Acts, vii. 55. (*n*) Rev. v. 13.

(*o*) 2 Cor. xiii. 14. and ſee Rev. i. 4, 5.

(*p*) Compare Iſaiah, xliv. 6. xlviii. 12. (and at the ſame time obſerve carefully the latter part of v. 11.) Rev. i. 8. with Rev. i. 17. ii. 8. xxi. 6. xxii. 13.

(*q*) Heb. i. 2. (*r*) Heb. i. 3.

" were made by him; and without him " was not any thing made that was made (*s*)."
" By him were all things created that are " in heaven, and that are in earth, visible " and invisible: whether they be thrones, " or dominions, or principalities, or pow- " ers: all things were created by him, and " for him. And he is before all things: " and by him all things consist (*t*)" Finally, by his heavenly Father himself he is thus addressed: " Thou, Lord, in the beginning " hast laid the foundation of the earth, and " the heavens are the works of thine hand. " They shall perish; but thou remainest: " and they all shall wax old, as doth a " garment. And as a vesture shalt thou " fold them up, and they shall be changed: " but thou art the same, and thy years shall " not fail (*u*)."

To some persons this fundamental doctrine, the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, seems attended with insuperable difficulties.

(*s*) John, i. 3. (*t*) Colos. i. 16, 17.
(*u*) Heb. i. 10—12.

That

That it is attended with difficulties I do not deny. But conſider, in the firſt place, the difficulties on the other ſide of the queſtion. Suppoſe, for a moment, the doctrine of the Divinity of Chriſt to be falſe: then read once more the preceding paragraph; weigh the natural import of the titles, attributes, and deſcriptions there quoted as being applied in the Scriptures to Chriſt; and aſk yourſelf whether, if he to whom they are ſo applied be other than God, there is any meaning in words, any confidence to be repoſed in language, even in the language of Revelation. Aſk yourſelf whether it be poſſible that inſpiration would be given, and given by the God of wiſdom, goodneſs, and truth, in ſuch a manner as to have deceived, it is not too much to ſay neceſſarily to have deceived, the maſs of the Chriſtian world from the days of the apoſtles to the preſent hour: and to have deceived Chriſtians as to a point confeſſedly of ſupreme importance, the very God whom they were to adore. Aſk yourſelf whether it be poſſible that, when the

Jewiſh Scriptures had been uninterruptedly directing their whole force for more than fifteen hundred years to effect the extermination of all idolatrous worſhip; the Chriſtian Scriptures, deriving their authority from the ſame divine ſource, ſhould come forth abounding in expreſſions preciſely fitted, on the preſent ſuppoſition, to re-eſtabliſh idolatrous worſhip: for if Chriſt be not God, to worſhip him, or to pay to him any ſpecies of divine honour, is idolatry. Aſk yourſelf whether it be poſſible that God, who, when alluding to idolatry, continually characteriſes himſelf as "a jealous "God (*v*);" who ſolemnly affirms "I am "the Lord; and my glory will I not give "to another (*w*);" would himſelf addreſs his Son in theſe terms, "Thy throne, O "God, is for ever and ever (*x*);" if that Son were not a partaker of his godhead. Are theſe difficulties leſs embarraſſing than

(*v*) See Exod. xx. 5. xxxiv. 14. Deut. iv. 24. and many other paſſages.

(*w*) Iſaiah, xlii. 8. and ſee xlviii. 11, 12.

(*x*) Heb. i. 8.

thoſe

thoſe which attend the true doctrine, the divinity of our Redeemer? For, in the ſecond place, what are the difficulties, which that doctrine involves? You may ſum them up in theſe few words. You feel that it is, in your apprehenſion, hard, perhaps you will chooſe to ſay impoſſible, to reconcile the divinity of Chriſt with that great ſcriptural truth, the unity of God. The unity of God is unqueſtionably a great ſcriptural truth: and the divinity of Chriſt, if it were irreconcilable with that truth, would be no true doctrine. But dare you aver, that the divinity of Chriſt is irreconcilable with the unity of God? Dare you, who experience in your own perſon the intimate union of two ſubſtances of oppoſite natures, the one ſpiritual, the other corporeal; dare you preſume, in the face of this experience, to aſſert that it is impoſſible for two kindred ſpiritual beings to be united in the ſame godhead? Dare you, the child of a day, affect to meaſure with the ſcanty ſpan of your ignorance the ſecrets of eternal infinity? Dare you, who cannot examine

the ſmalleſt of your Creator's works without finding yourſelf ſurrounded with inexplicable difficulties; dare you take upon you to define what is poſſible and what is not poſſible in the divine nature of him who made you and all things? If you claim ſuch high prerogatives for your reaſon, act conſiſtently with that reaſon: forbear authoritatively to pronounce on ſubjects, which exceed the graſp of your comprehenſion; and humbly believe what he, who cannot lie, reveals concerning himſelf. The mode of union exiſting in the godhead between the Father and the Son is unknown, and incomprehenſible to you. Be it ſo. Seek not to explain the mode, becauſe God hath not unfolded it to man: but acknowledge the union, becauſe God hath declared it in the Scriptures.

If your mind remains unſatisfied, let me ſtill requeſt your deliberate attention. Reflect that difficulties reſpecting moral poſſibilities, difficulties equally great with thoſe which you conceive to belong to the

doctrine of the Trinity, and arising from the same cause, the limited nature of your faculties; attend you during the investigation of the plainest attributes of God. Take his eternity for an example. What maxim are you less disposed to call controvertible, than this; that nothing can take place without a cause? What can be more staggering, more overwhelming to reason, than that a being should exist without a beginning, without a cause? If you say that God is the cause of his own existence; you multiply words only to leave the subject more obscure. For if you mean this explanation to remove the difficulty, it must imply these palpable and impious absurdities: that the Supreme Being once did not exist; and, before he existed, operated to produce his existence. Begin now to reason in another line: infer from your own existence and that of the universe, the necessity of the existence of a Creator: and you find that this train of argument necessarily leads you on to perceive that a being must have existed for ever, without

beginning,

beginning, and without cauſe. But obſerve, for this is at preſent the material point, that although it obliges you to acknowledge this truth, it does not in the ſmalleſt degree leſſen or remove the original difficulties with which you found it accompanied. It takes no notice of them. It leaves them untouched; preciſely as they were. The truth remains in itſelf as ſtaggering and overwhelming as before. You ſee that it is undeniably a truth: but are utterly incapable of comprehending the mode of the fact. You clearly perceive, however, that what your reaſon is incapable of comprehending, what it is at firſt diſpoſed to reject as irreconcilable with ſome undeniable propoſition, may on other grounds of reaſoning be proved to your complete ſatisfaction indiſputably certain, even while your original difficulty remains undiminiſhed and untouched. Apply this example to the caſe of the Trinity. And if you ſtill feel the continuance of the difficulties as to the mode of the union, which at firſt inclined you preſumptuouſly to re-

gard

gard the exiſtence of three divine perſons (for to the divinity of the Holy Spirit all the foregoing reaſoning reſpecting the divinity of Chriſt may be transferred) as inconſiſtent with the unity of the godhead: remember that on other grounds of reaſoning, namely on the declarations of the inſpired Scriptures, you ſtill have indiſputable warrant for believing that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are God, and One God.

But all theſe glories were laid aſide, voluntarily laid aſide. "The Word was made "fleſh, and dwelt among us (*w*)."—"Chriſt "Jeſus, who, being in the form of God, "thought it not robbery to be equal with "God, made himſelf of no reputation, and "took upon him the form a of ſervant, and "was made in the likeneſs of men. And "being found in faſhion as a man, he "humbled himſelf, and became obedient "unto death, even the death of the "croſs (*x*)."—"He took not on him the

(*w*) John, i. 14. (*x*) Philip. ii. 6–8.

"nature

"nature of angels, but (that of) the ſeed "of Abraham: and was in all things made "like unto his brethren: and was in all "points tempted like as we are, yet with-"out ſin (*y*)." When he became partaker of fleſh and blood, his life was marked by humiliation and ſufferings. He was born in the loweſt ſtation. His mother, indeed, conformably to the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah, was a deſcendant of the royal houſe of David. But it is evident to what obſcurity and poverty that branch of the race of David was reduced, from the circumſtance of the Virgin Mary being eſpouſed to Joſeph, who was a carpenter. The very place of our Saviour's birth was a ſtable; there being no room for his mother and Joſeph in the inn. In a very ſhort time he was hurried into Egypt, that he might eſcape the jealous fury of Herod. When, after a youth paſſed in obſcurity, he entered upon his public miniſtry, he was employed in conſtant and laborious journeyings and preachings in towns, in

(*y*) Heb. ii. 16, 17. iv. 15.

villages,

villages, in the wilderneſs, without leiſure, relaxation, or a ſettled home. The foxes have holes; the birds of the air have neſts: but the Lord of all things, become the ſon of man, had not where to lay his head (z). Though he was continually occupied in doing good to men, healing all kinds of bodily diſeaſes, and teaching the way to everlaſting happineſs; he met with unceaſing oppoſition, reproaches, calumny, and perſecution: and was repeatedly compelled to deliver himſelf by a miracle from attempts made upon his life. This courſe of unjuſt treatment he well knew to be preparing the way for uſage ſtill more iniquitous and cruel. Again and again he forewarned his diſciples of the death that awaited him: and the nearer his death approached, the more frequently did he recall it to their remembrance. On the evening at the cloſe of which he was ſeiſed by his enemies, having retired to the garden of Gethſemane with his diſciples, he underwent the moſt bitter agony at the proſpect

(z) Mat. viii. 20.

of the ſufferings which he was about to undergo: and prayed in the anguiſh of his ſoul, that, if it were poſſible, poſſible conſiſtently with the full attainment of thoſe objects for the accompliſhment of which he took human nature upon himſelf, the bitter cup might paſs from him without his drinking of it. Yet he added with perfect reſignation to the good pleaſure of his Father; "nevertheleſs, "not my will, but thine, be done!" The circumſtances which then took place were ſuch as were peculiarly calculated to augment the weight of his afflictions. He was betrayed into the hands of his murderers by one of his own diſciples. When he was ſeiſed, all his other diſciples forſook him and fled. And though Peter afterwards followed him to the houſe of the High Prieſt; it was not to comfort, but to deny him three times, deliberately, and with oaths. When he was brought to trial, though the falſe witneſſes, ſuborned to accuſe him, could prove none of the charges which they advanced; though Pilate, the Roman governor, declared himſelf convinced

vinced of his innocence, and ſhewed a ſtrong deſire to ſet him at liberty; the malice and violence of his enemies prevailed. Expoſed to the groſſeſt and the moſt ſavage inſults, ſcourged, derided, ſmitten, crowned with thorns, he was nailed by his hands and feet to the croſs: while the triumphant ſcoffs of his perſecutors continued, and even one of the two malefactors, crucified together with him, joined in reviling him. On that croſs, however, it was not neceſſary that he ſhould linger in anguiſh. The paſt miſery was all that his glorious undertaking exacted of him. He therefore cried with a loud voice, "It is finiſhed (*a*):" and while the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the beholders ſtood aghaſt with aſtoniſhment and terror, bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.

Such were, in few words, the ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt. They were ſufferings ſo extraordinary in their nature and extent, and ſuſtained by one, who was not only

(*a*) John, xix. 30.

free from all taint of ſin, but of ſuch tranſcendent dignity and power; that the cauſe for which they were endured muſt neceſſarily have been of unparalleled importance. What was that cauſe? You will ſay, and you will ſay truly, that one great purpoſe, for the attainment of which Jeſus Chriſt came in the fleſh, was to communicate to men a clearer knowledge of their duty to God, and to ſet before them in his own conduct a pattern of practical holineſs. Without all doubt this was one of the momentous purpoſes for which the Son of God became man. But was this the only purpoſe? Conſider, before we examine further what the Scriptures teach us on the ſubject, how improbable it ſeems that this ſhould have been the only purpoſe. Conſider the methods which the Almighty on former occaſions had ſeen fit in his wiſdom and goodneſs to adopt. When the Jewiſh religion was eſtabliſhed by revelation from heaven; God did not judge it neceſſary to ſend down to earth a meſſenger higher than men and angels. He deemed it ſufficient

to employ a mere prophet, Moſes, for that purpoſe. When the Jews had grievouſly departed from the holy worſhip which they had been commanded to obſerve; Elijah, and other mere prophets, were the miniſters whom God ſent forth to reclaim them. It is not unreaſonable, therefore, humbly to conclude that if, at the time when Chriſtianity was firſt revealed, the only purpoſe of the Deity had been to inſtruct men in a purer mode of worſhip, and a more holy courſe of life; he might probably have employed ſome prophet to execute the commiſſion, inſtead of his own ſon, the Lord of glory. Again; if no other purpoſe than that which has been ſpecified was to be accompliſhed by the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh; why was it ordained that he muſt be put to death, and even to the moſt cruel and ignominious death, that of the croſs? When the Deity appointed prophets in ancient times to preach a new religion, or to recall men from wickedneſs and idolatry; he did not think it requiſite that thoſe prophets ſhould be put to death, either as a

proof of the truth of all that they pronounced in his name, or as an example of patient conſtancy and obedience to their followers. Moſes died a natural death, in peace, full of years and of honour. Elijah, inſtead of being cut off by his enemies, was bleſſed with the privilege of not dying at all; and was taken up alive into heaven. There appears then very ſtrong reaſon to conclude, before we conſult the Scriptures further, that God would not have ſent his own ſon as man upon earth, and ſent him to be "a man of ſorrows, and acquainted "with grief (*b*)," to be betrayed, to be ſcourged, to be derided, to be crucified: if ſome other moſt important end, beyond that of giving to men directions for their future conduct, had not been thus, perhaps thus only, to be attained. What then was that other end for the attainment of which Chriſt came and ſuffered? Turn to the ſacred volume: "Surely he hath borne "our griefs, and carried our ſorrows."— "He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions:

(*b*) Iſaiah, liii. 3.

"he

" he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the " chaſtiſement of our peace (by which our " peace with God was effected) was upon " him: by his ſtripes we are healed. All " we, like ſheep, have gone aſtray: and " the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities " of us all (*c*)." His ſoul was made " an " offering for ſin: for the tranſgreſſion of " the people was he ſtricken (*d*)." Such is the language of the Old Teſtament, prophetically deſcribing the then future ſacrifice of the Meſſiah as already paſt. Conſult the New Teſtament, and acknowledge the prediction verified. Chriſt is " the Lamb " of God, which taketh away the ſins of " the world (*e*)." He is " the good ſhep- " herd," that came to " lay down his life " for the ſheep, to give his life a ranſom " for many (*f*)."—" Chriſt, our paſſover, " is ſacrificed for us (*g*)."—" Chriſt hath " loved us; and given himſelf for us, an " offering and a ſacrifice unto God (*h*).

(*c*) Iſaiah, liii. 4–6. (*d*) Ibid. 8–10.
(*e*) John, i. 29. (*f*) John, x. 15. Mat. x. 28.
(*g*) 1 Cor. v. 7. (*h*) Epheſ. v. 2.

"We were reconciled to God by the death "of his ſon; by whom we have now re-"ceived the atonement (*i*)."—"We have "redemption through his blood, even the "forgiveneſs of our ſins (*k*)."—"He has "reconciled us to God, having made peace "through the blood of his croſs (*l*)."—"God made him, who knew no ſin, to be "ſin (a ſin-offering) for us, that we might "be made the righteouſneſs of God in "him (*m*): who his own ſelf bare our ſins "in his own body on the tree (*n*)."—"Chriſt "ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, "that he might bring us to God (*o*)."—"He "waſhed us from our ſins in his own "blood (*p*)."—"We were redeemed with "the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb "without blemiſh and without ſpot (*q*)." He it is "whom God hath ſet forth to "be a propitiation through faith in his "blood (*r*)."—"He hath appeared, to put

(*i*) Rom. v. 10, 11. (*k*) Coloſ. i. 14.
(*l*) Coloſ. i. 20. (*m*) 2 Cor. v. 21.
(*n*) 1 Pet. ii. 24. (*o*) Ibid. iii. 18.
(*p*) Rev. i. 5. (*q*) 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.
(*r*) Rom. iii. 25.

"away

"away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. By "his own blood he hath obtained eternal "redemption for us. We are ſanctified "with his blood (*s*)." But is it clear that you, that I, may have an intereſt in theſe bleſſings? Did Chriſt ſuffer and make atonement for all mankind; or but for a part of the human race? Theſe are momentous queſtions. For if Chriſt died only for a part of the human race, he may not have died for you or for me. But let us take comfort. Our God, the God of mercy, is no reſpecter of perſons. Hear his gracious language long before the coming of the Redeemer. "Have I any pleaſure "that the wicked ſhould die, ſaith the "Lord God? As I live, ſaith the Lord "God, I have no pleaſure in the death of "the wicked; but that the wicked turn "from his way and live. Turn ye, turn "ye, from your evil way; why will ye "die (*t*)." Hear the voice of the ſame God proclaiming by the inſpired writers of the

(*s*) Heb. ix. 12. 26. xiii. 12.
(*t*) Ezek. xviii. 23. xxxiii. 11.

New

New Teſtament the univerſality of the offer of ſalvation through Chriſt. "The Lord "is not willing that any ſhould periſh; but "that all ſhould come to repentance (*u*)."— "God our Saviour will have all men to be ſaved (*v*)."—"Chriſt gave himſelf a ranſom for all (*w*)."—"Jeſus Chriſt the righteous is "the propitiation for our ſins: and not for "ours only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole "world (*x*)." Hear the gracious invitation of Chriſt himſelf. "Come unto me, all ye "that labour and are heavy laden; and I "will give you reſt (*y*)." Hear his explicit declaration: "The Son of Man muſt "be lifted up (on the Croſs), that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, "but have eternal life. For God ſo loved "the world, that he gave his only-begotten "Son, that whoſoever believeth in him "ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting "life (*z*)." Hear his final commiſſion, on his departure from earth, to his diſciples.

(*u*) 2 Pet. iii. 9.
(*v*) 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.
(*w*) 1 Tim. ii. 6.
(*x*) 1 John, ii. 12.
(*y*) Matt. xi. 28.
(*z*) John, iii. 15, 16.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the "Goſpel to every creature. He that be-"lieveth, and is baptiſed, ſhall be ſaved (*a*)." But perhaps there may be crimes of too deep a dye to be waſhed away by the blood of Chriſt! Fear not: "The blood of Chriſt "cleanſeth us from all ſin (*b*)."

In return for the meritorious obedience and ſufferings of our bleſſed Saviour, "the "Lord from heaven," when he appeared as the Son of Man, "the Second Adam (*c*)," to repair the evils brought upon the human race by the firſt (for "as in Adam all die, "even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made "alive (*d*);" and to bruiſe the head of the ſerpent, the devil, who by corrupting our firſt parents had entailed ſin and miſery on a ruined world; his Heavenly Father exalted him, in his human nature to his own right-hand, and placed him at the head of the univerſe. "Chriſt Jeſus, being found "in faſhion as a man, humbled himſelf;

(*a*) Mark, xvi. 15, 16. (*b*) 1 John, i. vii.
(*c*) 1 Cor. xv. 47. (*d*) 1 Cor. xv. 22.

"and

"and became obedient unto death, even "the death of the croſs. Wherefore God "alſo hath highly exalted him; and given "him a name which is above every name: "that at the name of Jeſus every knee "ſhould bow of things in heaven, and "things in earth, and things under the "earth: and that every tongue ſhould "confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the "glory of God the Father (*e*). God raiſed "him from the dead, and ſet him at his "own right-hand in the heavenly places, "far above all principality, and power, "and might, and dominion, and every "name that is named not only in this "world, but in that which is to come: "and hath put all things under his feet: "and given him to be head over all things "to the church (*f*)." The apoſtle, when he affirms that "the Saviour, the Lord "Jeſus ſhall change our vile body that it "may be faſhioned like unto his glorious "body," carries the mind forward to his

(*e*) Philip. ii. 5—10.

(*f*) Epheſ. i. 20—22: and ſee Coloſſ. i. 18. ii. 10.

omnipo-

omnipotence; "according to the working "whereby he is able to ſubdue even all "things to himſelf (*g*)." Hear our Saviour's own words: "All things are de-"livered unto me of my Father (*h*). All "power is given unto me, in heaven and "in earth (*i*)." In this ſtate of ſupreme exaltation the church, which he purchaſed with his blood is ſtill the object of his affectionate and unremitting care. "Lo, I "am with you always, even unto the end "of the world (*k*). Where two or three "are gathered together in my name, there "am I in the midſt of them (*l*)." At this hour he pleads his merits as an atonement for the continual tranſgreſſions to which even his faithful ſervants are expoſed during their ſtate of probation. "He is "entered into heaven itſelf, now to appear "in the preſence of God for us (*m*). If "any man ſin, we have an advocate with

(*g*) Philip. iii. 21. (*h*) Matt. xi. 27.
(*i*) Matt. xxviii. 18. (*k*) Matt. xxviii. 20.
(*l*) Matt. xviii. 20. (*m*) Heb. ix. 24.

"the

" the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous (*n*). " He is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt " that come unto God by him; ſeeing he " ever liveth to make interceſſion for " them (*o*)." This mediatorial kingdom of Chriſt in his human nature ſhall continue to the conſummation of all things. " He " muſt reign, till he ſhall have put down " all rule, and all authority, and power; " till he hath put all enemies under " his feet. And when all things ſhall " be ſubdued unto him;" when he ſhall have raiſed the dead, and pronounced judgement on the whole human race, on the fallen angels, and on Satan himſelf (*p*); " then ſhall the Son deliver up the king- " dom to God, even the Father: then ſhall " the Son alſo himſelf," as man, " be ſub- " ject unto him that put all things under " him, that God may be all in all (*q*)."

Such is the diſpenſation of redemption through Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God.

(*n*) 1 John, ii. 1. (*o*) Heb. vii. 25.
(*p*) 2 Pet. ii. 4. (*q*) Jude, 6. Rev. xx. 2. 10.

What

What are the impreſſions with which it fills your heart? Are you overwhelmed with the magnitude of the mercy; and ready to cry out in aſtoniſhment with the Pſalmiſt, "Lord, what is man, that thou haſt ſuch "reſpect unto him; and the ſon of man, "that thou ſo regardeſt him (*r*)? The "thoughts of God are not as our thoughts; "nor his ways as our ways (*s*):" the mercy, vaſt as it is, is not too great for the God of Mercy. Are you ſurpriſed that you cannot fathom the depths of this myſterious plan for the ſalvation of mankind? It is a myſtery into which the very "angels "deſire to look (*t*)." Or are you proudly diſpoſed, with preſumptuous and profane reaſoners, to cavil at the inſcrutable counſels of Infinite Goodneſs: to queſtion the juſtice of God in permitting his guiltleſs Son to ſuffer for ſinful man—while yet his Son voluntarily took the ſufferings upon himſelf—or to contend that human tranſ-

(*r*) Pſalm viii. 4. (*s*) Iſaiah, lv. 8, 9.
(*t*) 1 Pet. i. 12.

greſſions

greſſions might have been freely forgiven without an atonement—while yet it is impoſſible for you to know that they could thus have been forgiven freely in conſiſtence with the attributes of God; and while it ſeems highly probable, as far as our limited faculties can preſume to conjecture, that ſuch an example of impunity would have been an encouragement to diſobedience throughout the univerſe? Leave to God "the ſecret things which belong to "him (*u*):" and accept with humble thankſgiving the ſtupendous bleſſing which he has revealed. Remember too that this bleſſing is, as to yourſelf, conditional. Salvation through Chriſt is offered to you, not forced upon you. It is promiſed to you only on the terms of entire ſubmiſſion to him and to his laws. If you love that Saviour who has loved you; if you give yourſelf to him, who gave himſelf for you; he will reward you with everlaſting glory. "But how ſhall you eſcape, if you neglect

(*u*) Deut. xxix. 29.

"ſo great ſalvation (*v*)." There is ſalvation in no other: "there is no other name "under Heaven given among men whereby "we muſt be ſaved (*w*)." If Chriſt affirmed to his diſciples, when he charged them to preach the Goſpel to every creature, "He "who believeth, and is baptiſed, ſhall be "ſaved:" he added, in the ſame ſentence, "He who believeth not ſhall be damn-"ed (*x*)." To you the Goſpel is preached: and the alternative is ſet before you, that you may make your choice. If you reject the Goſpel; or if, ſpeculatively believing its truth, you lead the life of one who diſbelieves it: if you follow the maxims and practices of a wicked world, inſtead of the commandments and the example of Chriſt; you have already read your doom.

V. But how, you exclaim, is a being like man, by nature prone to evil and diſinclined to good; ſurrounded with powerful

(*v*) Heb. ii. 3. (*w*) Acts, iv. 12.
(*x*) Mark, xvi. 15, 16.

and unceaſing temptations; and aſſailed by the unremitted malice of the ſame ſubtle adverſary, who enſnared the inhabitants of Paradiſe; how is ſuch a being, ſo circumſtanced, to fulfil the conditions, on the performance of which his ſalvation is to depend? This queſtion leads to the diſcloſure of another bleſſing purchaſed for you by your Redeemer. He has purchaſed for you the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, to enable you to do what by nature you cannot do.

The Holy Ghoſt is one of the perſons of the Trinity; partaking of the Godhead with the Father and the Son, yet in ſome reſpects, unexplained and probably inexplicable to man, diſtinct from each. It has already been ſhewn that the myſterioufneſs of this doctrine affords not any argument for heſitating to receive it, if plainly revealed in the Scriptures. Many are the proofs which the Scriptures furniſh of the Divinity and the diſtinct perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt. In the form of baptiſm preſcribed

ſcribed by our Saviour for all nations (*y*), His name is united with that of the Father and of the Son. He is again united with them in the apoſtolical benediction (*z*). To lie to him is to lie unto God (*a*). To deſpiſe him is to deſpiſe God (*b*). To blaſpheme him is an unpardonable ſin; and the only unpardonable ſin (*c*). He is denominated the Spirit (*d*); the Spirit of God (*e*); the Spirit of Chriſt (*f*); the Spirit of Truth (*g*); the Eternal Spirit (*h*); the Comforter (*i*). He is ſaid to ſearch all things, even the deep things of God (*k*). His diſtinct agency is frequently ſpecified in the Scriptures. "The Spirit ſaid unto

(*y*) Matt. xxviii. 19. (*z*) 2 Cor. xiii. 14.
(*a*) Acts, v. 3, 4. 9. (*b*) 1 Theſ. iv. 8.
(*c*) Matt. xii. 31, 32. Mark, iii. 28, 29. Luke, xii. 10. The ſin is probably unpardonable, as not to be followed by repentance: for they who blaſpheme the Holy Ghoſt, blaſpheme that ſpirit who alone worketh repentance.
(*d*) Acts, xi. 12. xvi. 7. 1 John, v. 6.
(*e*) Rom. viii. 9.
(*f*) Gal. iv. 6. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. compared with 2 Pet. i. 21.
(*g*) John, xiv. 17. xv. 26, and ſee 1 John, v. 6.
(*h*) Heb. ix. 14. (*i*) John, xiv. 16. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7.
(*k*) 1 Cor. ii. 10.

"Philip; Go near, and join thyſelf to this "chariot (*l*):" and afterwards "the Spirit of "the Lord caught away Philip," and conveyed him to Azotus. Unto St. Peter "the "Spirit ſaid, Behold three men ſeek thee: "ariſe therefore and get thee down, and "go with them, doubting nothing: for I "have ſent them."—"The Spirit bade me "go with them (*m*)," ſaith St. Peter, reciting the ſame event. "The Holy Ghoſt "ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul "for the work whereunto I have called "them (*n*)." Afterwards, when Paul with Timothy "had gone throughout Phrygia "and the region of Galatia, and were for-"bidden of the Holy Ghoſt to preach the "word in Aſia; after they were come to My-"ſia they aſſayed to go into Bithynia: but "the Spirit ſuffered them not (*o*)."—"Feed "the church of God," ſaith the ſame apoſtle, "over which the Holy Ghoſt "hath made you overſeers (*p*)." He it

(*l*) Acts, viii. 29. 39. (*m*) Acts, x. 19, 20. xi. 12.
(*n*) Acts, xiii. 2. (*o*) Acts, xvi. 6, 7.
(*p*) Acts, xxix. 28.

was

was who ſpake by the mouth of the ancient prophets (*q*): and who revealed to Simeon that he ſhould not die, until he had ſeen the Meſſiah (*r*). He viſibly deſcended in a bodily ſhape on Jeſus Chriſt, when baptiſed (*s*): and was given without meaſure to the Son of God now become man (*t*). Our Saviour promiſed to his diſciples that after his own departure, he would ſend to them from the Father the Holy Ghoſt, the Comforter, to teach them all things, to ſhew them things to come, to bring to their remembrance whatſoever Chriſt had ſaid to them, to guide them into all truth, to endue them with power from on high, and to enable them to make good their cauſe againſt worldly oppoſition (*u*). Theſe promiſes were faithfully accompliſhed. On the day of Pentecoſt the Holy

(*q*) Mark, xii. 16. Acts, i. 16. xxi. 11. xxviii. 25. 2 Pet. i. 21. Heb. iii. 7.

(*r*) Luke, ii. 26. (*s*) Luke, iii. 22.

(*t*) John, iii. 34.

(*u*) John, xiv. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7. 13. Matt. x. 18—20. Mark, xiii. 11. Luke, xii. 11, 12. xxi. 12—15. xxiv. 49. Acts, i. 8.

Spirit deſcended on the apoſtles, and ever afterwards abode with them (*v*). He empowered them to ſpeak various languages previouſly unknown to them; to attain to extraordinary degrees of wiſdom, of knowledge, and of faith; to prophecy; to heal diſeaſes; to perform many other ſignal miracles; and by impoſition of hands to convey to others the gifts of the Spirit (*w*). Theſe miraculous powers and endowments were calculated for the infancy of the Chriſtian church. They qualified the apoſtles to preach the religion of Chriſt to the inhabitants of far diſtant countries; and in every country to produce indiſputable credentials that they came ambaſſadors from God (*x*). In proceſs of time, when Chriſtianity had taken ſuch firm root in different parts of the world, that it no longer needed for its ſupport and progreſs ſuch

(*v*) John, xiv. 16.

(*w*) Acts, ii. 4. viii. 17. Rom. xv. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 4. &c.

(*x*) 2 Cor. v. 20.

viſible

viſible and wonderful interpoſitions of Divine power, they were gradually withdrawn. The influence of the Holy Ghoſt has ſince continued to be exerciſed principally in another moſt important office, an office in which it was alſo employed no leſs actively in the days of the apoſtles, that of enlightening and purifying the heart of each particular Chriſtian. It is "God that worketh in "us both to will and to do (*y*)" that which is right: and he worketh by the agency of the Holy Ghoſt. "Except a man be "born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot "enter into the kingdom of God (*z*)." We are to be "ſaved by the renewing of "the Holy Ghoſt (*a*)." By him we are to be changed into the image of Chriſt (*b*). "Love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentle-"neſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temper-"ance," are enumerated by the apoſtle as "the fruits of the Spirit;" in oppoſition to a liſt of the moſt flagitious crimes, which he denominates "the works of the fleſh,"

(*y*) Phil. ii. 13. (*z*) John, iii. 5.
(*a*) Tit. iii. 5. (*b*) 2 Cor. iii. 18.

the works to which the corrupt nature of man diſpoſeth him: with reſpect to which latter works he ſolemnly affirms, that they who do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God (*c*). But have we full aſſurance that the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, eſſential as it is to our ſalvation, will be afforded? Our Saviour has anticipated the queſtion. "Aſk and it ſhall be "given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: "knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. "If ye, being evil, know how to give "good gifts unto your children: how "much more ſhall your Heavenly Father "give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk "him (*d*)?" How then may his bleſſed help be ſecured? By fervent prayer to God, and by earneſt endeavours to "grow "in grace (*e*); to improve day by day in piety and good works. Think not that the Divine aſſiſtance will be beſtowed unaſked, unſought, unſolicited. Nor think that it

(*c*) Gal. v. 18—23. (*d*) Luke, xi. 9. 13.
(*e*) 2 Pet. iii. 18.

will

will be beſtowed that it may ſuperſede the neceſſity of your own exertions; that it may enable you to lead a careleſs life, without labouring to "work out your "ſalvation with fear and trembling (*f*)." Aſk in the name of Jeſus Chriſt for the ſanctifying aid of Divine grace; and it will not be withheld: ſtudy to improve by that which is beſtowed, and more will be granted. But "grieve not" by tranſgreſſion "the Holy Spirit of God (*g*);" leſt you be abandoned to yourſelf, "and given over "to a reprobate mind (*h*)."

(*f*) Philip. ii. 12. (*g*) Epheſ. iv. 30.
(*h*) Rom. i. 28.

CHAP. VIII.

ON THE CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE great pattern which a Chriſtian is uniformly to propoſe for his imitation, is the character of his Saviour. "Learn of "me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: "and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls (*a*)." —"I have given you an example, that ye "ſhould do as I have done (*b*)."—"Chriſt "ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, "that ye ſhould follow his ſteps (*c*)." —"Be "like-minded one towards another, accord-"ing to the example of Chriſt Jeſus (*d*)." —"Let that mind be in you, which was in "Chriſt Jeſus (*e*)." When our Lord laid aſide the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and took human

(*a*) Matt. xi. 29. (*b*) John, xiii. 15.
(*c*) 1 Pet. ii. 21.
(*d*) Rom. xv. 5. in the marginal tranſlation.
(*e*) Philip. ii. 5.

nature

nature upon him; "he was made like unto "his brethren, and was in all points "tempted like as we are (*f*)." Hence he is repeatedly ſtyled in the Scriptures the Son of Man, the man Chriſt Jeſus; and is deſcribed as growing not in ſtature only, but in wiſdom, and in favour with God. Hence too there appears an obvious reaſon for thoſe expreſſions, in which he ſpeaks of his inferiority to his Father, and his ignorance of a part of the divine counſels (*g*): expreſſions which, but for this conſideration, might have been deemed inconſiſtent with other expreſſions of his own (*b*), and with the doctrine of his divinity. Regarding him then in the ſtate in which he manifeſted himſelf in the fleſh, as a man, converſant with men, encompaſſed with the infirmities and ſubject to the pains and ſorrows of mortality; let us inveſtigate, with ſome degree of detail, the example which he has left for our imitation.

(*f*) John, xvii. 5. Heb. ii. 17. iv. 15.
(*g*) John, xiv. 28. Mark, xiii. 32.
(*b*) John, x. 15. 30.

The

The firſt duty required of men is piety towards God. The fervent piety of our Lord was his earlieſt and moſt prominent diſtinction. At the age of twelve years he left his mother and Joſeph, and repaired to the Temple at Jeruſalem; where he was found by them in the midſt of the Jewiſh teachers, hearing them, and aſking them queſtions. In anſwer to the Virgin Mary, whoſe addreſs to him implied conſiderable ſurpriſe, he ſaid, "How is it that ye ſought "me? Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my "Father's buſineſs (*i*);" employed in promoting the object for which I came into the world, the glory of my Heavenly Father? When occupied in the labours of his public miniſtry, we find that it was his cuſtom regularly to attend the ſynagogues, the eſtabliſhed places of worſhip, on the Sabbath, and to explain to the people the word of God (*k*). On every occaſion he ſpoke with the utmoſt reverence of the Holy Scriptures. He exhorted his hearers to read and

(*i*) Luke, ii. 48, &c. (*k*) Luke, iv. 16.

ſearch

ſearch them out: he interpreted ſuch parts as related to himſelf: he affirmed that they could not be broken; that not one circumſtance recorded therein ſhould paſs away without being fulfilled. In one of his parables he ſpeaks in the ſevereſt terms of thoſe who deſpiſed or neglected the Scriptures; declaring that if the perſons whom he deſcribed would not hear and obey Moſes and the prophets, neither would they be convinced, though one ſhould even be raiſed from the dead for their converſion. The rejection of Chriſtianity by the Jews after his own reſurrection practically confirmed the truth of this declaration. In all his actions he ſhewed the warmeſt zeal for the glory of God. When he came into the Temple, and ſaw the outward court crowded with people who ſold oxen, ſheep, and doves for ſacrifices; and with money-changers, who ſupplied ſuch as wanted Jewiſh money in exchange for foreign coin; he drove them from the place with indignation: and told them that the houſe of God was to be a houſe of prayer; but

that they had made it a den of thieves. All his own mighty works, his doctrines, his ſufferings, and his reſurrection, he aſcribed to the glory of God his Father. To him he habitually gave thanks on partaking or diſtributing of food. To him he prayed continually, at all ſeaſons, ſometimes alone, at other times with his diſciples. He encouraged them to be earneſt and conſtant in offering their petitions; and at their requeſt drew up a form of prayer, admirable alike for piety, ſimplicity, energy, wiſdom, and comprehenſiveneſs, to direct and aſſiſt their devotions. In all things he ſubmitted himſelf wholly to the will of God. And in his laſt agony, when he prayed with ſuch fervency that his Father would remove from him, if it were poſſible, the bitter cup; he cloſed his ſupplication with theſe words: "Nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine, be "done." Thus completely did our Bleſſed Saviour in all things obey the "firſt and "great commandment: Thou ſhalt love "the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

" with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind,
" and with all thy ſtrength (*l*)."

Let us proceed to the ſecond great commandment, which Chriſt pronounces to be " like unto the firſt: Thou ſhalt love thy " neighbour as thyſelf (*m*)." Of this command love, in the language of Scripture, that is to ſay, perfect benevolence neceſſarily including perfect juſtice, is the fulfilment (*n*). " He that loveth another hath " fulfilled the law. For this; thou ſhalt " not commit adultery; thou ſhalt not kill; " thou ſhalt not ſteal; thou ſhalt not bear " falſe witneſs; thou ſhalt not covet; " and if there be any other commandment; " it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, " namely, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour " as thyſelf. Love worketh no ill to his " neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling " of the law (*n*)." Chriſt, by laying aſide the majeſty of his Divine Nature, and ſuf-

(*l*) Matt. xxii. 37, 38. Mark, xii. 30.
(*m*) Mark, xii. 30. (*n*) Rom. xiii. 8—10.

fering

fering upon the croſs for our ſins, gave a proof of love towards mankind, ſo wonderful as to exceed the graſp of the moſt capacious underſtanding, and the acknowledgements of the warmeſt gratitude. Well do the Scriptures attempt, and they can do no more than attempt, to illuſtrate the tranſcendent love of Chriſt towards a depraved and guilty world, by contraſting his conduct with the ſtrongeſt examples of human affection. "Greater love hath no man than this; that "a man lay down his life for his friends. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: "yet peradventure for a good man ſome "would even dare to die. But while we "were yet ſinners, and enemies, Chriſt died "for us (*o*)." During his abode upon earth, he was continually occupied in works of kindneſs and compaſſion. In the words of the apoſtle, "he went about doing good." For the comfort of the ſoul, he preached forgiveneſs of ſins through his own death; and pointed out the ſure way to the king-

(*o*) John, xv. 13. Rom. v. 7—10. See alſo Coloſſ. i. 21, 22.

dom

dom of God. For the relief of the body, he healed all kinds of diſeaſes. He made the blind to ſee, the deaf to hear, the dumb to ſpeak, the lame to walk. He cleanſed lepers, caſt out evil ſpirits, raiſed the dead. Though in general he performed his miracles upon thoſe perſons who ſtood moſt in need of his aſſiſtance, and were alſo the moſt recommended to it by their faith: on ſome occaſions he ſignaliſed his Divine mercy by beſtowing benefits upon objects, whoſe unworthineſs excluded them from any pretenſion to his favour. Speaking of the loving-kindneſs of his Father, he deſcribes him not as pouring out his mercies only upon righteous men; but as making his ſun to ſhine on the evil as well as on the good; as ſending rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt. The ſame deſcription may be applied to himſelf. It is recorded of him that he frequently aſſociated with "publicans and ſinners," notwithſtanding the odium which his condeſcenſion excited, labouring for their converſion. When the ten lepers requeſted that he would heal

them, he immediately cleanſed them all; though he knew beforehand that only one of them would acknowledge the kindneſs by returning to give thanks to God. His benevolence appears in a diſtinguiſhed light from his ſteady diſcouragement of Jewiſh prejudices. At the well of Jacob he revealed his Meſſiahſhip to a woman of Samaria; and abode two days in the city, delivering inſtructions to the inhabitants. In his parable of the wounded traveller, the compaſſionate man was a Samaritan. Though in ſending forth his twelve diſciples to preach during his own life-time he forbade them to go into the countries of the Samaritans or of the Gentiles; he explicitly declared to them antecedently to his aſcenſion, that they ſhould be his witneſſes not in Judæa only, but in Samaria, and to the uttermoſt parts of the earth (*p*). When two of his apoſtles, enraged at the Samaritans who would not receive himſelf and his diſciples, becauſe their journey was

(*p*) Matt. x. 5. Acts, i. 8.

towards Jeruſalem, were deſirous of conſuming the inhoſpitable city by fire from Heaven; they experienced from their Maſter a ſevere reprehenſion. He not only exhorted his followers to love each other; but taught them a further leſſon ſtrange to their ears: "I ſay unto you, love your "enemies; bleſs them that curſe you; do "good to them that hate you; pray for "them that deſpitefully uſe you and per-"ſecute you: that ye may be the children of "your Father which is in Heaven." Still more forcibly to impreſs upon us the duty of benevolence, he conſtrains us to acknowledge in our daily prayers that we cannot deſire the forgiveneſs of our ſins unleſs we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us; even them that treſpaſs againſt us times without number (*q*). For his own murderers he prayed while he was hanging upon the croſs, at the time when he was enduring the utmoſt force of their torments. He ſolemnly aſſures us in language the moſt encouraging, that by whomſoever any act of kindneſs ſhall

(*q*) Matt. xviii. 21, 22.

be rendered, any aſſiſtance adminiſtered, even if it be but a cup of cold water, to the loweſt of his followers, from a ſpirit of Chriſtian charity; he will look upon it and reward it as done to himſelf (*r*). And now that he is aſcended into Heaven, he ſtill continues his affection for mankind. He guards and upholds his faithful ſervants; and guides and comforts them by the Spirit of his grace. By the ſame Spirit he labours to lead the wicked to repentance. He is at this hour making interceſſion for us at the right hand of God. And at the laſt day he will beſtow everlaſting glory and happineſs on thoſe, who ſhall have kept his commandments.

It is to pride that a very large proportion of the impiety, the injuſtice, and the other crimes prevalent in the world may be traced. This deteſtable paſſion our Saviour oppoſes in the moſt decided and pointed manner (*s*): and particularly by

(*r*) Matt. x. 42. xxv. 35—46.

(*s*) Yet in theſe days we hear people, who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, applauding and inculcating what they call "a *proper* pride."

ſetting

ſetting before us in his own conduct a perfect pattern of meekneſs and humility. Forbearing to recur to the unparalleled condeſcenſion which he evinced in "taking "upon himſelf the form of a ſervant in "the place of that of God, and being "made in the likeneſs of men;" conſider the ſtation in which he choſe to appear upon earth. He was born of lowly parentage, and laid in a manger. To this beginning his whole life was conformable. Though Lord of all things, he had not where to lay his head. He choſe for his diſciples not the powerful and the wealthy, not the wiſe and the learned, but individuals who were poor, ignorant, and deſpiſed. His conduct towards them was marked with ſingular mildneſs. He bore with their prejudices, their blindneſs, their unbelief; corrected their miſtakes with gentleneſs; and explained to them in private with unwearied kindneſs the inſtructions which, when delivered in public, they had not underſtood. After his laſt ſupper before his crucifixion, with his own hands, and

partly for the purpoſe of impreſſing on them a leſſon of humility (*t*), he waſhed their feet. "I have given you," ſaid he on that occaſion, "an example, that ye ſhould "do as I have done."—"He came," he ſaid, "not to be miniſtered unto, but him-"ſelf to miniſter unto others (*u*)." He was not elated by the mighty wonders which he had performed: but was accuſtomed, after he had wrought a ſignal miracle, to aſcribe the glory to God. "Go," ſaid he to the Gadarene, out of whom he had caſt many devils, "return to thine "own houſe, and ſhew how great things "God hath done unto thee (*v*)." By inſtances ſuch as theſe, concluſive as to his own unaſſuming character, he has left a memorable admonition to every one who may be diſtinguiſhed by ſuperior powers of body or of mind to beware of being puffed

(*t*) His conduct was alſo meant to be emblematical of the atonement which he was then about to make. See the whole account of the tranſaction, John, xiii. See alſo Luke, xxii. 24.

(*u*) Matt. x. 28. (*v*) Luke, viii. 39.

up

up by theſe endowments, as though they were proofs of merit in the poſſeſſor: to aſcribe to God with thankfulneſs and humility the glory of his own gifts: to pray that by the aid of his grace they may ever be applied to righteous purpoſes; and to remember that it is not the poſſeſſion but the right application of abilities which is praiſeworthy. Our Saviour commanded his diſciples to guard under all circumſtances againſt vain-glory and oſtentation; eſpecially in the great Chriſtian duties of prayer and of alms-giving. "When ye pray, be "not as the hypocrites are: for they love "to pray ſtanding in the corners of the "ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men. "But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into "thy cloſet: and when thou haſt ſhut the "door, pray to thy Father which is in ſe"cret. And when thou doeſt thine alms, "do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as "the hypocrites do, that they may have "glory of men. But when thou doeſt "thine alms, let not thy left hand know

"what thy right hand doeth: that thine "alms may be in ſecret." To theſe injunctions he ſubjoins this encouragement: "And your Father, which ſeeth in ſecret, "ſhall reward you openly (*w*)." And at the ſame time he explicitly teaches his followers, that they who perform theſe or other duties "to be ſeen of men, for the ſake of human applauſe, "*have* their reward" in this world, and ſhall "have no reward "from their Father who is in Heaven." The barren and fleeting breath of praiſe they may obtain from the world which they deceive: from God, whom they ſeek not to pleaſe and cannot delude, they have nothing to expect but the puniſhment due to their hypocriſy. From the brief accounts of our Lord's conduct recorded in the Goſpels we learn that the rules which he preſcribed to his diſciples were obſerved by himſelf. He ſet before them an example of conſtant attendance on public worſhip by regularly frequenting the ſynagogue;

(*w*) Matt. iv. 1—6.

but

but we are repeatedly told of his retiring to a mountain, or into a deſert, for the purpoſes of prayer. And it incidentally appears that he did not himſelf keep the purſe, out of which alms were diſtributed to the poor; but committed the charge of it to Judas, who afterwards betrayed him (*x*). One of the ſevereſt reproofs which he gave to the Jewiſh rulers is this: that they were ambitious of receiving honour one from another, and ſought not the honour which cometh from God only: or, as it is expreſſed in another place by the evangeliſt, "they loved the praiſe of men more than "the praiſe of God:" a diſpoſition to which our Saviour aſcribed as an almoſt neceſſary (*y*) conſequence, their rejection of the Chriſtian faith. In contradiſtinction to this ſpirit hear his own inſtructions. "Bleſſed are the meek. He that humbleth "himſelf ſhall be exalted. Whoſoever "ſhall humble himſelf as a little child, the "ſame ſhall be greateſt in the kingdom of

(*x*) John, xii. 6. xiii. 29.
(*y*) John, v. 44. xii. 43.

"Heaven."

"Heaven (z)." It has been ſhewn that his own actions were a faithful illuſtration of theſe precepts.

Our Saviour, whoſe abhorrence of all mixture of hypocriſy in acts of charity and of devotion has been recently noticed, ſtigmatiſes deceit in general, and in terms which imply extreme averſion. The falſehood of the Jews he pointedly reproves (a): and aſcribes lies to the Devil as their author (b). Of himſelf he ſays, "For this "cauſe came I into the world, that I might "bear witneſs to the truth (c)."—"Becauſe "I tell you the truth you believe me "not (d)."—"In my Father's houſe are "many manſions: if it were not ſo, I "would have told you (e)." His veracity ſhone conſpicuous under the hardeſt trials. He boldly rebuked and expoſed the vices of the Jews, and diſcountenanced their dar-

(z) Matt. v. 5. xviii. 4. Luke, xiv. 12.
(a) John, viii. 55. (b) John, viii. 44.
(c) John, xviii. 37. (d) John, viii. 45.
(e) John, xiv. 2.

ling

ling prepoſſeſſions, though perfectly aware of the hatred and active enmity which he thus drew upon himſelf. The great purpoſe of his life was to eſtabliſh his religion. Yet he never concealed from his followers the dangers and perſecutions which they would bring upon themſelves from the powers of this world by profeſſing his doctrine: but plainly forewarned them that they ſhould be hated and deſpiſed of all men, that they ſhould be driven from city to city, that they ſhould be ſcourged, afflicted, and put to death. In anſwer to Pilate's queſtion, whether he was a king, he returned without heſitation the dangerous avowal, that he was (*f*). A clear and

(*f*) John, xviii. 37. Pilate therefore ſaid unto him, "Art thou a king then?" Jeſus anſwered, "Thou "ſayeſt that I am a king:" that is, according to the idiom of the language, Thou ſayeſt *rightly*, that I am a king. That this mode of expreſſion was an acknowledgement and affirmation of the fact, concerning which the queſtion enquired, is evident from Luke, xxii. 70, 71. and alſo from a compariſon of Mat. xxvi. 64. with Mark, xiv. 62. where the latter evangeliſt, inſtead of the words, "Thou haſt ſaid," in our Saviour's anſwer to the queſtion whether he was the Son of God, ſubſtitutes the words, "I am."

forcible

forcible admonition is this to us that no worldly advantage whatever will juſtify a deviation from the paths of truth.

Courage is a quality which obtains from mankind much higher praiſe than it deſerves. In conſequence of its obvious utility it is commonly permitted without inquiry to take its place among the virtues. But, conſidered in itſelf, it has no more an inherent title to be denominated a virtue than bodily ſtrength, or ſwiftneſs, or than wit, or reaſon. It is an inſtrument: and becomes the object of approbation or of diſapprobation (for in this caſe as in others we transfer to the quality, according to the ordinary uſe of language, the praiſe or blame which belongs to the agent) ſolely according to the principles upon which it is cultivated and employed. When natural fortitude is cultivated by its poſſeſſor for the ſake of promoting the glory of God and the welfare of his creatures; and is exerted in the face of danger for the purpoſe of promoting that glory and that welfare; we

behold

behold it with reverence. Such was the fortitude of Jeſus Chriſt. In this ſenſe his whole life was a demonſtration of his fortitude. Several of thoſe particulars in his conduct, which have been cited as proofs of his veracity, might be repeated as ſhining examples of religious magnanimity. As the hour of his death drew nigh, and afterwards when the fatal period had now overtaken him, the manifeſtations of his magnanimity were numerous and matchleſs. Though he knew the ſufferings which awaited him at Jeruſalem, he undauntedly went thither to the paſſover; foretelling to his diſciples, who followed him in amazement and terror, every thing which was to befal him. At his laſt ſupper, when Judas was about to betray him, Jeſus calmly ſaid to him, "That which thou "doeſt, do quickly." And when the traitor aroſe, and went out to conduct the ſoldiers that they might ſeize upon his Maſter, our Lord, who knew the reaſon of the departure of Judas, far from ſhewing any marks of fear, rejoiced at the approach of

his death for the redemption of mankind; and ſaid, "now is the Son of Man glori-"fied; and God is glorified through him." In his agony in the garden, his human nature recoiled at the thoughts of the anguiſh which he was to undergo. But his moſt fervent prayers to be delivered, if it were poſſible conſiſtently with the redemption of man, from that anguiſh, were accompanied with another, that the determination of his heavenly Father ſhould take place. Let it be remembered that the death and ſufferings of our Saviour were perfectly optional. All was in his own power. "I lay down my "life: no man taketh it from me; but I "lay it down of myſelf (*g*)."—"Thinkeſt "thou that I cannot now pray to my Fa-"ther; and he ſhall preſently give me "more than twelve legions of angels? But "how then," added our Lord, "ſhall the "Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt "be (*h*)?" He ſpoke; and reſigned himſelf to his enemies. When Peter denied him, Chriſt looked upon the fallen apoſtle

(*g*) John, x. 17, 18. (*h*) Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

with

with an eye of calm pity that pierced his heart. When ſmitten unjuſtly, he replied with magnanimous compoſure; "If I have "done evil, bear witneſs of the evil: but "if well, why ſmiteſt thou me?" When derided and blaſphemed before his crucifixion by the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders, by the Roman ſoldiery, and by Herod and his men of war; when mocked and reviled, as he hung upon the croſs, by his enemies who exulted in the ſpectacle, and even by one of the malefactors crucified with him: he bore without emotion all that malice could deviſe; and, as the prophet had foretold (*i*), was like a lamb led to the ſlaughter, and opened not his mouth. A principal foundation of this holy fortitude in our Saviour was his conviction of the perfect innocence and righteouſneſs of his life. Herein alſo he hath given us an example. He, who conſcientiouſly and habitually endeavours to diſcharge, as the diſciple of Chriſt, his duty to God and his neighbour, will receive ſuch gracious aſſiſt-

(*i*) Iſaiah, liii. 7.

ance

ance from above as will ſuſtain him under all the diſtreſſes and afflictions of life, and fill him with hope and conſolation on the bed of death.

By ſuperficial enquirers it has been affirmed that the Goſpel inculcates not either patriotiſm or friendſhip. And this falſe aſſertion has been brought forward as an objection to Chriſtianity. That the Goſpel mentions not the term patriotiſm, nor commands under the ſhape of a formal precept the duties obviouſly comprehended in the term, is true. And he, who conſiders that the Jews regarded the love of their country as conſiſting in contempt and abhorrence of every other nation; and that the Romans had converted the ſame principle into a pretext for ſubjugating the world to the dominion of Rome; will not deem it wonderful that Chriſt was cautious of referring to the ſubject in direct precepts, which in conſequence of the erroneous and miſchievous opinions univerſally prevalent on the ſubject, would probably have been perverted

perverted or misunderstood. Yet while by teaching the equality of all nations in the sight of God under the Gospel, and by inculcating on all men the duty of mutual benevolence as between brethren, he guarded against the mistakes and excesses to which patriotism, ill understood, has so often led: he taught both by precept and example the duty of loving our country. When in reply to an ensnaring inquiry he commanded the Jews to render unto Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's; he taught the first duty of patriotism, faithful obedience to lawful governors. Tribute he paid himself: and wrought a miracle that he might pay it (*k*). The impending destruction of Jerusalem he lamented with the most affectionate concern, and with tears (*l*). After having been obliged when he came to preach at Nazareth, the place where his youth was passed, to save his life by a miracle from the rage of his unbelieving countrymen; he returned in the following year to that city to renew his attempt at the risk of

(*k*) Matt. xvii. 27. (*l*) Luke, xix. 41, 42.

equal danger (*m*). With reſpect to friendſhip, our Saviour confirmed its obligations by the ſanction of his own example. His whole conduct to his diſciples is a pattern of tender friendſhip. St. John is particularly diſtinguiſhed as "the diſciple whom "Jeſus loved." Lazarus, who was not one of his diſciples, is called by Chriſt himſelf his friend (*n*); and was one of the very few perſons whom Chriſt raiſed from the dead. The affectionate regard of our Saviour to Lazarus and his ſiſters is beautifully expreſſed in the ſimple and touching language of the evangeliſt: "Now Jeſus loved "Martha, and her ſiſter, and Lazarus (*o*)." Conſider, too, the remarkably kind attention of our Saviour towards Peter; who, after his ſhameful denial of his Lord, might juſtly apprehend that he ſhould no longer be owned as a diſciple. One of the angels, who appeared to the women at the ſepulchre on the mornings of the reſurrection, addreſſed them, conformably, we may pre-

(*m*) Luke, iv. 16—30. Matt. xiii. 54—58.

(*n*) John, xi. 11. (*o*) John, xi. 5.

ſume,

ſume, to the injunction of Chriſt, in theſe terms: "Depart, ſay to his diſciples, *and* "*to Peter*, he goeth before you into Gali-"lee (*p*)." To St. Peter, and to him only, Chriſt ſhewed himſelf ſeparately on the very day on which he aroſe. And afterwards, in the preſence of ſix of his other diſciples, he confirmed St. Peter, with marks of great confidence and diſtinction, in the apoſtolical office (*q*). Finally, it was in the very act of bleſſing his diſciples that Chriſt aſcended into heaven (*r*).

To the inſtances which have been produced of different virtues ſo glorioufly exemplified in our Saviour's actions, many circumſtances of his life evincing the ſame and other virtues might have been added (*s*). Far from wiſhing to exhauſt, had it been

(*p*) Mark, xvi. 7. (*q*) Luke, xxiv. 34. 1 Cor. xv. 5.
(*r*) John, xxi. 15, &c.
(*s*) Luke, xxiv. 51. A very copious ſelection, accompanied with many excellent obſervations, may be found in Archbiſhop Newcome's Obſervations on our Lord's conduct.

poſſible to exhauſt, the ſubject; my deſire is to lead you to apply habitually to the ſacred ſource, from which the preceding examples have been derived. Study the life of your Saviour, in his thoughts, words, and deeds. By prayer and exertion endeavour to be conformed to his image upon earth, as you hope to be conformed to it in heaven. Take for your guide, imitate as far as human weakneſs can imitate, this perfect pattern of perfect holineſs. Far as you will ever remain ſhort of it, labour ſtill to approach nearer to it. The more earneſtly you ſtrive to be a faithful diſciple of your Lord, the more of "that mind "will be in you, which was in Chriſt "Jeſus (*t*)."

(*t*) Philipp. ii. 5.

CHAP. IX.

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE SUBVERSION OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

WHEN the divine author of Chriſtianity had withdrawn his viſible preſence from the earth; his religion ſpeedily experienced, according to his predictions, the encreaſing enmity of a world whoſe practices it condemned, whoſe forms of worſhip it ſuperſeded. The pure gold was to be tried in the furnace of adverſity. Scarcely had the apoſtles of Chriſt opened their commiſſion, when a violent perſecution, commencing with the martyrdom of Stephen, was raiſed "againſt the church which was "in Jeruſalem: and they were all ſcattered "abroad throughout the regions of Judea "and Samaria, except the apoſtles (*a*)." This ſudden diſperſion of the Chriſtians was rendered by the overruling hand of God

(*a*) Acts, viii. 1.

the cauſe of an immediate and extenſive diffuſion of the true faith. "They, which "were ſcattered abroad upon the perſecu- "tion that aroſe about Stephen, travelled "as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and An- "tioch, preaching the word (*b*)." The implacable hatred of the Jews remained undiminiſhed. Some few years afterwards "Herod the king ſtretched forth his hands "to vex certain of the church; and he "killed James, the brother of John, with "the ſword. And, *becauſe he ſaw it pleaſed "the Jews*, he proceeded further to take "Peter alſo (*c*)." The virulence with which St. Paul was conſtantly oppoſed, and his life repeatedly attempted, by the Jews both in Judea and in diſtant countries, atteſt the rooted inveteracy with which that nation beheld Chriſtianity and its preachers. From this enemy, however, the faith of Chriſt was in a great meaſure delivered by the victories of Titus.

But an enemy far more terrible remained; the idolatrous empire of Rome. From his

(*b*) Acts, xi. 19. (*c*) Acts, xii. 1—3.

throne

throne in that capital the emperor from time to time "ſtretched forth his hands," not, like Herod, merely to ſeize ſome unfortunate victims within the walls of the city where he dwelt; but "to vex and to "kill," even in the utmoſt parts of the Roman world, thoſe who conſcientiouſly refuſed to burn incenſe to the gods of the pantheon. The perſecutions which the Chriſtians endured under the emperors are uſually enumerated as ten: a number not very accurate, as it exceeds in amount the perſecutions which were general throughout the empire; and falls far ſhort of thoſe which raged at different times in particular provinces. Polytheiſm, limited by no bounds, was always ready to admit the reception of a new deity. The Romans had never ſcrupled to venerate the gods of the countries which they ſubdued; and the conquered countries had without heſitation united the gods of Rome with the original objects of their national worſhip. The Chriſtians, therefore, who ſteadily refuſed all intercourſe with idols, were regarded by

the poſſeſſor of the throne of the Cæſars as rebels alike againſt the majeſty of heaven and his own. They ſuffered alſo from being to a certain degree confounded, in the common apprehenſion, with the Jews; whom, in the words of Tacitus, the Romans, like the Perſians and the Greeks, conſidered as "the moſt deſpicable portion of "their ſlaves." In addition to thoſe cauſes of ſuſpicion and abhorrence, they had to encounter the effect of the groſſeſt and moſt malignant calumnies raiſed and ſpread abroad with unwearied activity by their Jewiſh and Pagan adverſaries: calumnies partly calculated to rouſe the imperial jealouſy, by repreſenting the Chriſtians as the partiſans of "another king, one Jeſus (*d*);" partly to render them objects of univerſal deteſtation, by deſcribing them as addicted in ſecret to the moſt flagitious and horrible crimes, and as being the cauſe, by their impiety and vices, of every calamity, foreign or domeſtic, which afflicted the ſtate. Hence aroſe the miſeries which they ſuſ-

(*d*) Acts, xvii. 17.

tained

tained during nearly three centuries, ſometimes from the fury of legal vengeance, at other times, from the unauthoriſed but unreſtrained outrages of the people.

The Chriſtians, for ſuch were evidently the perſons whom Suetonius ignorantly denominates "the Jews who raiſed continual "tumults in Rome at the inſtigation of "Chriſt," were expelled from that city by Claudius (*e*). With this indication of diſpleaſure the emperor appears to have been ſatisfied. His ſucceſſor Nero led the way in exacting ſanguinary laws againſt the Chriſtians; and in ſubjecting the wretched objects of his antipathy to the moſt cruel tortures. Suſpected of being himſelf the author of the conflagration by which Rome was deſolated, he laid the crime to the charge of the Chriſtians; fixing the accuſation, as Tacitus informs us, on them, in conſequence of the general abhorrence in which they

(*e*) The fact probably was, that the Jews, ſtigmatiſed and oppreſſed, might create ſome diſturbances; and that the Chriſtians, being regarded as a ſect of Jews, were involved in the ſentence of baniſhment.

were held. He cauſed many of them to be crucified; to be devoured by wild beaſts; or, being firſt wrapped in garments overſpread with pitch and ſulphur, to be faſtened to ſtakes, and in that ſituation burned to illuminate his gardens by night (*f*). With his death A. D. 68, this perſecution cloſed; and his edicts were annulled by the ſenate. About twenty-five years afterwards the flame broke out afreſh with great violence under Domitian. It was, however, extinguiſhed in a ſhort time by the death of the tyrant; whoſe laws were abrogated by Nerva. But let it not be ſuppoſed that in theſe or other times, when there exiſted no law againſt Chriſtians, they enjoyed a freedom from perſecution. They were in fact ſubjected throughout the empire to local perſecutions even to death; whenever the populace, impelled by its own blind rage, or ſtimulated by an intereſted and idolatrous prieſthood, clamoured for their deſtruction. On this head it will be ſufficient to refer to the well-known letter of

(*f*) A. D. 64. See the account in Tacitus.

Pliny

Pliny the younger, written by him while governor of Pontus and Bithynia, to Trajan: in which he appears weary at length of ordering to execution the numbers of perſons brought before him on the charge, and on the ſingle charge, of Chriſtianity; and requeſts directions from the emperor for his future conduct. Trajan replies, that the Chriſtians ſhould not be officiouſly ſought out: but that every perſon who ſhould be accuſed and convicted of being a Chriſtian, and ſhould refuſe to recant, muſt be put to death. Such was the treatment which the Chriſtians received from a prince celebrated, and juſtly celebrated, for general mildneſs and equity! What treatment then muſt they have experienced under ſuch characters as commonly filled the imperial throne? Under this edict, by which the ſituation of the Chriſtians was certainly meliorated, many diſtinguiſhed perſons ſuffered martyrdom. Simeon, the biſhop of Jeruſalem, and ſon of Cleopas, was crucified: and Ignatius, biſhop of Antioch, was

ſlung, by the command of Trajan, to wild beaſts in the amphitheatre.

In the reign of Adrian it ſpeedily became the practice of the people in different provinces, to require during the celebration of their public games the deſtruction of the Chriſtians: a demand with which the magiſtrates, fearing, or pretending to fear, that popular commotion would be the conſequences of a refuſal, frequently complied. Adrian at length iſſued an edict, commanding that the law of Trajan ſhould be punctually obeyed.

In the reign of Antoninus Pius, the charge of atheiſm and impiety reiterated againſt the Chriſtians, and made the groundwork of many ſeverities, was repelled by Juſtin Martyr in his "Apology" preſented to the emperor; who, in conſequence, confirmed the edict of Adrian. That law, which forbade the Chriſtians to be ſought after and puniſhed unleſs they were guilty of ſome crime, being evaded afreſh by their enemies,

enemies, who interpreted Chriſtianity itſelf to be a crime; the emperor interpoſed with equal juſtice and vigour to prevent the repetition of the cruel enormities, which under that ſubterfuge had been committed.

His ſucceſſor Marcus Antoninus, without expreſsly revoking any exiſting law which afforded protection to the followers of Chriſt, diſgraced himſelf by liſtening to the obloquy poured forth againſt them; and by edicts, in which he branded them as arrogant, obſtinate, and wicked. In conſequence of theſe proofs of the temper of the prince, a furious perſecution of the Chriſtians, A. D. 177, aroſe in many parts of the empire. Againſt a Chriſtian, the moſt improbable accuſation was inſtantly received; and great numbers, among whom was the aged Polycarp, biſhop of Smyrna, and the diſciple of Saint John, ſuffered death in its moſt horrid forms. In ſome places Chriſtianity was almoſt annihilated.

After an interval of comparative quiet, perſecution raged again, at the end of the

ſecond

ſecond century, and the beginning of the third, under Severus; who promulgated a law prohibiting any of his ſubjects from renouncing the religion of his anceſtors for the Chriſtian faith. The names of various eminent perſons who ſuffered death under the operation of this edict are recorded by eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians. And in this perſecution, no leſs than in others, the holy fortitude of the weaker ſex under dangers and torments was as conſpicuous as that of men.

From the death of Severus to the reign of Maximin, the Chriſtians experienced no moleſtation; and occaſionally enjoyed marks of favor from the intervening emperors. With the acceſſion of Maximin their calamities recommenced. Dreading the reſentment of the Chriſtians, on account of his aſſaſſination of the younger Severus, whom they loved as their protector; he in the firſt inſtance ſeized and put to death the biſhops, whom that emperor had received into the number of his intimate friends:

friends: and afterwards directed his vengeance againſt the leaders of the church with a degree of fury, which rouſed the enemies of the goſpel to vent their rage in the moſt ſanguinary manner againſt Chriſtians of every deſcription.

When Decius aſcended the throne, A. D. 249, the horizon grew darker than ever; and ſuch a ſtorm fell upon the Chriſtians as they had never yet encountered. The emperor commanded the Prætors, on pain of death, to annihilate the Chriſtian name, by extirpating all perſons of that religion, or by torturing them until they ſhould recant. During two years vaſt multitudes of Chriſtians were put to death with circumſtances of the moſt ſavage cruelty. Vaſt multitudes alſo, ſhuddering at the proſpect of the lingering horrors which awaited them, "having no root, fell away (*g*);" and ſcreened themſelves by apoſtacy or by diſſimulation. Under the two ſucceeding emperors, Gallus and Voluſianus, the per-

(*g*) Luke, viii. 6. 13.

ſecution

ſecution continued. The Chriſtians were not only expoſed in common with the reſt of the empire to the general miſeries of the age; among which famine and civil war, and a peſtilence raging during fifteen years with unexampled havock, are painted in the ſtrongeſt language by cotemporary writers; but they had alſo to bear the odium of being the cauſe of the public calamities, and to meet the vengeance which this accuſation drew upon them.

Valerian, A. D. 254, becoming emperor reſtored peace to the church during the firſt years of his reign. But when Macrianus, a bitter foe to the Chriſtians, acquired the aſcendant in his counſels; he forbade their aſſemblies, and ſent their biſhops and principal teachers into exile. In conſequence of another edict, a conſiderable number of Chriſtians, among whom were Cyprian, biſhop of Carthage, and Sixtus, biſhop of Rome, were put to death. The perſecution extended itſelf throughout the empire; and was accompanied with every poſſible

poſſible aggravation of torture. Valerian was at length taken captive by the Perſians: and the Chriſtian world reſted until the reign of Aurelian. In the year A. D. 275, this prince was meditating its deſtruction. But his plans were rendered abortive by his own death. And the church, though not exempt from occaſional inſtances of oppreſſion, was ſuffered to remain during the remainder of the century in tolerable tranquillity.

Early in the following century a perſecution, more ſevere and bloody than any of thoſe by which it had been preceded, aſſailed and almoſt overwhelmed the profeſſors of Chriſtianity. Diocletian, who governed a large portion of the Roman empire, which now began to be divided among ſeveral colleagues, was averſe to ſanguinary meaſures, and was originally no enemy to the Chriſtians. But the calumnious artifices of the Pagan prieſts, who now ſaw additional cauſe of alarm, as Conſtantius Chlorus, one of the junior em-

perors, had renounced idolatry, were aided by the indefatigable ſolicitations of the other Cæſar, Galerius, the ſon-in-law of Diocletian. The enemies of the true faith prevailed. An edict iſſued by Diocletian, A. D. 303, commanded all the churches to be demoliſhed; and the Chriſtians to be deprived of their ſacred writings, and of all their civil privileges and immunities: and occaſioned the death of many individuals, who refuſed to ſurrender to the magiſtrates their religious books. A ſecond edict ordered the impriſonment of all biſhops and miniſters of the Goſpel. A third commanded that the moſt exquiſite tortures ſhould be employed to conſtrain theſe captives to lead the way in open apoſtaſy. A fourth, promulgated A. D. 304, enjoined all magiſtrates to exerciſe theſe tortures upon all Chriſtians, without diſtinction of rank or ſex, for the purpoſe of forcing them to renounce their religion. Theſe edicts, which extended over the whole Roman empire, with the exception of the province of Gaul, over which Conſtantius Chlorus preſided, were

executed with ſuch active and unrelenting zeal, that the Chriſtian faith was reduced to the extremity of diſtreſs. On the reſignation of Diocletian, Galerius was advanced to the vacant dignity: and the ſufferings of the Chriſtians in the provinces under his control were augmented. Soon afterwards, to his extreme mortification, the vacancy in the Imperial throne occaſioned by the death of Conſtantius in Britain, A. D. 306, was filled by Conſtantine, ſon of the deceaſed emperor, and afterwards denominated the Great. Between Conſtantine and Galerius a civil war ſpeedily commenced. At length the latter, weighed down to the grave by a horrid diſtemper accompanied with inconceivable anguiſh, commanded by a ſolemn edict, A. D. 311, the perſecution againſt the Chriſtians to ceaſe. It was prolonged, however, by his ſucceſſors Maximin and Licinius; and by Maxentius, who had made himſelf maſter of Italy and Africa. The war continuing, and Maxentius having periſhed in the

Tiber, after a defeat from Conſtantine, A. D. 312; the victorious emperor immediately publiſhed, in conjunction with his colleague Licinius, who now ſaw the propriety or the neceſſity of acquieſcence, an edict which accorded to the Chriſtians the unmoleſted enjoyment of their religion. In the following year Maximin, being vanquiſhed in a conteſt with Licinius, ended his own life by poiſon. And Licinius himſelf, who in the ſecond of the civil wars which afterwards broke out between himſelf and Conſtantine, renewed his perſecution of the Chriſtians, and tortured and ſlew many of their biſhops; being finally defeated and depoſed, A. D. 324, left Conſtantine ſole maſter of the Roman world.

The protection which this emperor granted to the Chriſtians in the early part of his reign does not appear to have flowed from a decided conviction that their faith had an excluſive title to univerſal

verſal reception (*b*). His humanity rendered him adverſe to perſecution. His ſound underſtanding taught him the policy of cultivating the good-will of his Chriſtian ſubjects. And he appears to have entertained a favourable, though very indiſtinct, opinion of the claims of their religion to a divine origin. He regarded, however, the ancient religion of the empire as alſo true and uſeful; and profeſſed an impartial deſire that the old and the new faith ſhould be equally exerciſed and honoured. But he who already knew ſomewhat of Chriſtianity, and was deſirous of knowing more, could not permanently continue in a ſtate of indifference and ſuſpenſe. By degrees the emperor perceived that Chriſtianity was true, and that every other religion muſt neceſſarily be falſe. Conformably to this conviction he earneſtly exhorted all his ſubjects, by edicts iſſued A. D. 324, to

(*b*) See Moſheim's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, tranſlated by Maclaine, 8vo. 1782, vol. i. p. 321. To the ſame author I refer the inquirer into the controverted ſubject of the croſs, ſaid to have appeared to Conſtantine.

receive and embrace the Goſpel: and towards the cloſe of his reign proceeded to exert the force of his authority for the abolition of idolatrous ſacrifices, and for the deſtruction of heathen temples. He died A. D. 337.

During the three centuries which had now elapſed ſince the death of our Saviour, Chriſtianity, upheld by the promiſed aſſiſtance of its Divine Author, and riſing with augmented force from the bloody conflicts of perſecution, had overſpread almoſt every part of the known world. From the unqueſtionable teſtimony of Irenæus it is manifeſt, that Chriſt was worſhipped in the ſecond century, and worſhipped as one of the perſons of the Godhead, almoſt throughout the whole Eaſt; and likewiſe among the Germans, the Spaniards, the Gauls, the Britons, and many other nations; among whom Tertullian ſpecifies the Gætulians and the Moors. In the third century, the true faith prevailed more and more in the countries which it had previouſly

viouſly reached: and was communicated to the inhabitants of other regions, among whom a tribe of Arabians converted by the labours of Origen, part of the Goths, who occupied Mæſia and Thrace, and part of the neighbouring tribes of Sarmatia, are particularly mentioned. Among the ſecondary cauſes which a late (*i*) hiſtorian enumerates as having conduced to the rapid progreſs of Chriſtianity; cauſes to which it is plainly his intention adroitly to lead his readers to transfer the whole effect, to the excluſion of the firſt cauſe, and conſequently to the excluſion of the

(*i*) Mr. Gibbon. Youthful readers ought to be appriſed that this hiſtorian, while continually labouring to undermine the faith of Chriſtians occaſionally by deluſive argument, but more frequently by ſneering reflections aimed at the doctrines or the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, adopts an inſidious and diſhoneſt cuſtom very general among unbelievers; namely, that of affecting at proper intervals to uſe language, which ſeems to imply their belief in the religion they are endeavouring to ſubvert. If any perſons, after reading the Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ſhould ſtill ſuppoſe Mr. Gibbon to have been a believer in Chriſtianity; the peruſal of his poſthumous works cannot fail to remove the miſtake.

truth of the religion; he ſpecifies one, which undoubtedly exiſted and was conſiderably efficacious: the virtues of the early Chriſtians. "Let your light ſo ſhine "before men," ſaid Chriſt to his diſciples, "that they may ſee your good works, "and glorify your Father which is in "Heaven (*k*)." The "good works" of the early Chriſtians, and the ſuperiority in point of rectitude, manifeſt among the profeſſors of the religion of Chriſt over ſurrounding Pagans, were undeniable. "Neither in Parthia do the Chriſtians, "though Parthians, uſe polygamy: nor "in Perſia, though Perſians, do they marry "their own daughters: nor among the "Bactri, or Galli, do they violate the "ſanctity of marriage: nor, wherever "they are, do they ſuffer themſelves to "be overcome by ill-conſtituted laws and "manners (*l*)." Is this teſtimony ſuſpicious becauſe it is that of a friend, a Chriſtian

(*k*) Matt. v. 16. (*l*) Bardeſanes quoted by Euſebius.

ian writer? Hear then the confeſſion of enemies. When Pliny inquired of Trajan, in the letter already cited, concerning the future treatment of the Chriſtians; what account does he give of them to the emperor? He relates that they were "accuſtomed to aſſemble on an appointed "day to ſing a hymn to Chriſt, as a God: "and to bind themſelves by oath, that "they would not be guilty of theft, nor "of robbery, nor of adultery; that "they would never falſify their word; "nor deny a pledge committed to them, "when called upon to return it." Lucian (*m*) ſays of the Chriſtians, againſt whom he directed the utmoſt poignancy of his wit, "that their lawgiver, whom "they worſhip, has taught them that "they are all brethren: that they have an "extreme contempt for all the things of "this world: that the expedition which "they uſe when any of their friends is "known to be in trouble is inconceiv-

(*m*) De Morto Peregrini.

"able;

" able; and that on ſuch an occaſion they " ſpare nothing: that they deſpiſe death, " and ſurrender themſelves to ſufferings." Notwithſtanding the numerous inſtances of individuals, who " in time of perſecu- " tion fell away;" who purchaſed by diſ- ſimulation, by unwarrantable compliances, or by open apoſtaſy, an exemption from the cruelties to which a conſcientious ad- herence to their religion would have ex- poſed them: yet the promptitude with which multitudes encountered exile, con- fiſcation, tortures, and death in the moſt dreadful ſhape, for the ſake of their faith, made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion on their perſecutors as to be deemed a characteriſtic feature of the Chriſtians. Of this aſſertion the paſſage recently quoted from Lucian is a proof. Epictetus the ſtoic, and the emperor Marcus Aurelius, affirm the ſame thing. The former indeed ignorantly aſcribes the intrepidity of Chriſtians to madneſs or faſhion; and the latter to obſtinacy. The fact, however, they concur in atteſting.

We

We could not doubt, even if hiſtory were ſilent on the ſubject, that the holy reſignation and conſtancy evinced by the martyrs, and even by thoſe of tender age and of the weaker ſex, would not only animate their ſurviving friends to patient endurance, and to ſtrenuous exertion for the diffuſion of their faith; but would alſo draw the attention of many of the Pagan ſpectators, and even occaſionally of the Pagan tormentors and executioners, to a religion, by which ſuch heroical reſolution was inſpired.

Among the obſtacles which Chriſtianity had to encounter in its progreſs, one which was no ſmall impediment has not yet been noticed; the internal diſſenſions of Chriſtians concerning points of religious doctrine or diſcipline. The apoſtle had ſaid to his Corinthian converts, "I hear "that there are diviſions among you; and "I partly believe it: for there muſt alſo "be hereſies among you; that they which "are approved may be made manifeſt (*n*)."

(*n*) 1 Cor. xi. 19.

The

The ſame ſpecies of probation by which St. Paul thought it probable that Providence would permit the Corinthians to be tried, was one of the teſts by which the Supreme Being thought fit that the whole Chriſtian church ſhould be put to the proof. Scarcely had St. Peter and St. Paul "opened the door of faith to the Gen-"tiles," before "certain men came down "from Judea, and taught the brethren, "ſaying; except ye be circumciſed after "the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be "ſaved." And though the apoſtles and elders, aſſembled in council at Jeruſalem, decidedly condemned theſe teachers and their doctrine: the Judaizers long continued to "trouble and ſubvert the "ſouls(o)" of the Gentile congregations. Other ſymptoms of a ſtrong tendency in the Chriſtians to form themſelves into ſects, and to arrange themſelves under diſtinct leaders, ſoon appeared. Such diſſenſions were the chief occaſion of St. Paul's firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians: in

(o) Acts, xiv. 27. xv. 1, 24.

which he complains that "every one ſaith, "I am of Paul; and I, of Apollos; and I, "of Cephas; and I, of Chriſt (*p*)." At another time the ſame apoſtle ſpeaks of teachers, "whoſe word will eat as doth a "canker;" and mentions by name "Hy-"meneus and Philetus, who concerning the "truth have erred, ſaying that the reſur-"rection is paſt already; and overthrow "the faith of ſome (*q*)." Hymeneus had previouſly been characteriſed by St. Paul as having "put away a good conſcience, and "made ſhipwreck concerning the faith:" whom, and Alexander, he adds "I have "delivered unto Satan, that they may "learn not to blaſpheme (*r*):" that is to ſay,

(*p*) 1 Cor. i. 12.

(*q*) 2 Tim. ii. 18. The doctrine of theſe falſe teachers appears to have been this; that the reſurrection ſpecified in the Goſpels was not a real but a figurative reſurrection; not a future exiſtence, but a preſent reformation; a death unto ſin and a riſing again unto a life of righteouſneſs: which, however, was not likely to be real or durable among thoſe, who thus ſophiſtically explained away the ſanctions of religion. Hymeneus had accordingly loſt his "good conſcience" as well as his faith.

(*r*) 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.

as we collect from the import of the ſame phraſe in another paſſage, the apoſtle had by his miraculous power inflicted upon them a bodily diſtemper, that, being reclaimed by that ſignal chaſtiſement, their ſouls might be ſaved in the day of the Lord (*s*). Corrupt and ſelfiſh introducers of hereſies are ſtigmatiſed with great ſeverity by St. Peter and St. Jude (*t*): the latter of which apoſtles repreſents them as even then "denying the only Lord God and "our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." St. John, in his firſt and ſecond Epiſtles, exerts himſelf with great earneſtneſs in oppoſition to heretics who "denied the Father and "the Son, and confeſſed not that Jeſus "Chriſt is come in the fleſh," denied the divinity and the incarnation of Chriſt; and commands them to be cut off from all communion and intercourſe with the adherents to the true faith. In the book of Revelations, the Nicolaitans and other he-

(*s*) 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.
(*t*) 2 Pet. ii. 13—21. Jude, 3, 4, &c.
(*u*) 1 John, ii. 18—23. 2 John, 7—11.

retical

retical ſects are mentioned by Chriſt himſelf with extreme abhorrence, and are threatened with condign puniſhment (*v*). Among the ſources of the wildeſt and moſt deteſtable hereſies one of the moſt productive was the attachment ſecretly entertained by many of the Chriſtian converts to the tenets, which they had formerly imbibed from the Oriental, or from the Grecian philoſophy. "Beware," ſaid St. Paul to the Coloſſians, "leſt any man ſpoil you "through philoſophy and vain deceit; "after the tradition of men, after the ru- "diments of the world, and not after "Chriſt (*w*)." The admonition was moſt neceſſary. The philoſophiſing Chriſtians ſpeedily began to repreſent their former tenets as ſubſtantially confirmed and illuſtrated by the Goſpel; and to twiſt the Scriptures to ſuch interpretations as might ſeem to uphold the aſſertion. Of all theſe

(*v*) Rev. ii. 6. 14, 15, 16. 20—23.

(*w*) Coloſſ. ii. 8. and obſerve the four preceding verſes.

philoſo-

philoſophers the Orientaliſts, or Gnoſtics(x), were the moſt extravagantly chimerical. In their hands Chriſtianity evaporated into the moſt abſurd and blaſphemous myſticiſm. The divinity, the humanity, and the ſufferings of Chriſt were alike denied by them: Moſes and the Old Teſtament were regarded with utter abomination: the Divine Author of the Jewiſh law, and the Creator of the world, was reviled as a ſubordinate being, and as a being intrinſically evil: the books of the New Teſtament were either totally renounced; or were curtailed, enlarged, corrupted, and perverted. It was in Egypt that theſe peſtilent doctrines produced, in the ſecond century, under various forms and teachers, the greateſt miſchief to the Chriſtian church. Among the fanatical founders of other ſects before the cloſe of that century a principal place is due to Montanus, who affirmed himſelf to be

(x) The Gnoſtics derived their name from γνωσις, ſcience or knowledge. For an account of their philoſophy conſult Moſheim, vol. i. 133, &c.

ſent

ſent with a Divine commiſſion to exalt to a proper tone the weak and imperfect morality of the Goſpel. Though he was ſeparated, in conſequence of his impious fanaticiſm, from the communion of the church; the auſterity of his doctrine obtained to him the reſpect of many followers, among whom we lament to ſee the name of Tertullian. In the third century the philoſophy of Plato advanced in credit among many of the learned Chriſtians, and became a conſiderable ſnare to Origen and his diſciples: who alſo encumbered the ſimplicity aud clouded the light of the Goſpel by ſubtle and allegorical interpretations. About the ſame period Manes, or Manichæus, a Perſian (*y*), incorporating with the Chriſtian ſyſtem the tenets of his countrymen the ancient Magi; particularly their leading doctrine of the coëternal exiſtence of two adverſe beings, the one the ruler of light or good, the other of darkneſs or evil; and rejecting the greater part

(*y*) The principal tenets of the Manichæans are explained by Moſheim, vol. i. p. 395, &c.

of the New Teſtament, announced himſelf as commiſſioned from above to eſtabliſh a right faith and right practice by a new Goſpel, dictated to him, as he averred, by God himſelf. Regarding, like the Gnoſtics, matter as intrinſically and eſſentially corrupt, he enjoined on his *elect* followers the perpetual mortification of the body, the renunciation of external comforts, and the extinction of all deſires tending to the purſuit of external objects. To the ſubordinate claſs of his diſciples, denominated *hearers*, he permitted ſome relaxation of his frantic auſterity. Noetus, Sabellius, Paul of Samoſata, and others, became diſtinguiſhed in this age by various heretical opinions concerning the Trinity: opinions which appear to have ariſen chiefly from an abſurd and preſumptuous deſire to elucidate two ſubjects which muſt ever remain inexplicable by man, the mode of union between the perſons of the Godhead, and between the Divine and the human nature of Chriſt. Several inferior topics of diſſenſion contributed to agitate the Chriſtian church.

Among theſe controverſies there may be noticed the diſputes concerning the method in which recanting heretics were to be re-admitted into the congregation. Many of the Oriental and African churches required ſuch perſons to be re-baptiſed: while the greater part of the European Chriſtians uſed no other form on ſuch occaſions than prayer and the impoſition of hands. On the one ſide Cyprian, biſhop of Carthage, a man of moderation, and, on the other, Stephen, biſhop of Rome, a violent and imperious prelate, took the lead in this controverſy. The reception alſo into the church of perſons who had been excommunicated on account of heinous tranſgreſſions, or had apoſtatiſed under perſecution, was a topic which excited vehement contention. The Novatians, ſo called from their leader Novatus, became remarkable by adopting on this ſubject the line of unrelenting rigour. It muſt be acknowledged with regret that in each of theſe controverſies Chriſtian charity, though not violated by all the combatants without exception, was

frequently diſregarded. And it muſt alſo be confeſſed, that many of the Chriſtian writers, in defending the true faith againſt erroneous brethren or againſt unbelievers, were accuſtomed to employ rhetorical ſophiſtries, arts, evaſions, incompatible with ſimple and ſober inveſtigation.

Antecedently to the commencement of this century the ſect of Aſcetics had gradually ariſen in Egypt; and had extended itſelf into Syria and the adjoining regions. They were characteriſed, ſometimes, like the Grecian and Roman philoſophers, by a peculiar garb; and at all times by an extreme and unnatural ſtrictneſs of voluntary diſcipline. Solitude, abſtinence, watchings, profound and continued meditation, were among the religious ſeverities by which they laboured to abſtract their minds from earthly objects, and to render their ſouls more adapted, as they conceived, for communion with God. Hitherto they had contented themſelves with exerciſing their auſterities in the courſe of domeſtic life. But now,

now, becoming more and more gloomy, unſocial, and moroſe, they frequently renounced their friends and their families; ſequeſtered themſelves in caves and deſerts; and tortured themſelves with the wildeſt penances which a diſordered imagination could ſuggeſt. A conſiderable portion of myſticiſm derived from the Platonic ſchool generally went hand in hand with theſe extravagances of conduct.

After the deceaſe of Conſtantine, his empire was divided among his three ſons; until by the death of the eldeſt brother in a civil war againſt the youngeſt, and the ſubſequent aſſaſſination of the conqueror by a rebel, it centered in Conſtantius. The three brothers were favourers of Chriſtianity; and laboured, though not always by unobjectionable means, to aboliſh the Pagan ſuperſtition. That ſuperſtition however experienced a determined ſupport from the emperor Julian, who aſcended the throne A. D. 361. His averſion to the Chriſtian religion, which the artifices of

the Platonic philoſophers chiefly led him to renounce, was aggravated by antipathy to the other branches of the Conſtantine family, ſtained with the blood of his neareſt relations. Affecting moderation, he aſſailed the Chriſtians with equal dexterity and bitterneſs. He abrogated their privileges; ſhut up their ſchools; encouraged ſectaries and ſchiſmatics: and exerciſed againſt the Goſpel the wit of his Imperial pen. In order to decry the prophecies of Chriſt, he encouraged the Jews to rebuild the Temple of Jeruſalem. But the undertaking was fruſtrated, according to the relation of Ammianus Marcellinus, a Pagan philoſopher, by earthquakes, and the eruption of balls of fire, which diſperſed the terrified workmen, and demoliſhed their labours. After a ſhort reign of twenty months Julian died in the Perſian war. By enemies to the Chriſtian faith his character has been undeſervedly exalted. His genius was conſiderable: his love of letters, and his military courage, ſtill greater. But he was the

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ſlave of ſuperſtition; addicted to magic; credulous and vain-glorious in the extreme; and confirmed in habits of cunning, diſſimulation, and duplicity. His ſucceſſor Jovian, and the emperors who followed to the cloſe of the century, particularly Theodoſius the Great, exerted themſelves with various degrees of zeal for the ſupport of Chriſtianity. The ancient religion of the empire declined on all ſides more and more: and the Goſpel advanced into new regions, Armenia, Iberia, and Ethiopia.

Yet this century was in many reſpects productive of the moſt ſerious calamities to the church. Perſecution indeed, after its ſhort-lived efforts under Galerius and his coadjutors, had been nearly idle; except when it rouſed Athanaric, king of the Goths, againſt the converted part of his ſubjects: or when, infuſing into the mind of Sapor, the Perſian monarch, ſuſpicions of the political fidelity of the Chriſtians, it deluged Perſia with their blood. Perſecution, however, may deſerve to be ſtyled the friend of

Chriſtian virtue. At leaſt it is an enemy far leſs dreadful than proſperity accompanied by ſchiſms, hereſies, and corruption of diſcipline, morality, and doctrine. Among ſchiſms, that of the Donatiſts in Africa ſtands pre-eminent. It aroſe A. D. 311, in conſequence of the election of a biſhop of Carthage by the neighbouring prelates without the accuſtomed concurrence of thoſe of Numidia. The latter choſe another biſhop: and the controverſy was brought before Conſtantine, who appears to have been deſirous of acting with great impartiality. Two ſucceſſive councils of biſhops, convened from various provinces, decided againſt the Donatiſts: and the judgement, being brought by appeal before the emperor, was by him carefully examined in the preſence of the contrary parties, and confirmed. Hence he was loaded by the Donatiſts with the moſt acrimonious abuſe: until at length he deprived them of their churches, baniſhed their ſeditious biſhops, and put ſome of them to death. He ſoon however returned to milder counſels: and

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to terminate the ravages and maſſacres of the Circumcelliones, a numerous and powerful ſet of banditti, compoſed of the frantic populace who embraced the party of Donatus, revoked the laws which had been enacted againſt that faction. His ſons alſo endeavoured to heal the ſchiſm. But Donatus and his aſſociates oppoſed all accommodation; and pronounced the adverſe churches to have fallen from Chriſtian communion. The defeat of their army, the Circumcelliones, by Macarius, broke their power: numbers of the Donatiſts were baniſhed, and others put to death; and much unjuſtifiable ſeverity was exerciſed. Julian reſtored the exiles to their country and their privileges: and their influence ſoon became predominant. Gratian, A. D. 377, deprived them by his edicts of their churches, and prohibited their aſſemblies. But in the face of theſe laws they ſoon afterwards were found able to number no fewer than four hundred African prelates of their party. About the cloſe of the century, however, they rapidly declined, through internal diviſions,

viſions, and the zealous exertions of Auguſtine, biſhop of Hippo.

About the time when the Donatiſts aroſe, Arius, a preſbyter of Alexandria, advanced his peculiar opinions reſpecting the Son of God; affirming him not to partake of the Divine nature, and to be no more than a mere creature, although the firſt indeed and nobleſt of thoſe which the Almighty had formed. Notwithſtanding the expulſion of Arius from the communion of the church by a council held at Alexandria, his tenets, which he ſtrenuouſly laboured to eſtabliſh, attracted ſo much attention, and gained ſo great a number of partiſans; that Conſtantine, to quiet the troubles and commotions ſpreading throughout the empire, aſſembled a council of the deputies of the church, A. D. 325, at Nice in Bithynia, by which the Arian doctrine was condemned. In ſome few years the emperor, perſuaded by the friends of Arius that their leader had been unjuſtly treated; and receiving from them ſuch an explanation of his opinions

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as rendered them in appearance not eſſentially different from the faith of the church, recalled him from the baniſhment into which he had been ſent, and diſtinguiſhed him by marks of favour. Among the ſucceſſors of Conſtantine, ſeveral were favourers of Arianiſm. And the opinions of the Chriſtian world too often fluctuated in compliance with the changing ſentiments of its maſters. Each party in turn laboured to eſtabliſh its victory by unjuſtifiable proceedings againſt the other. In proceſs of time the Arian doctrine branched out into various forms and ſubdiviſions. Apollinaris, in oppoſing it, fell into the contrary error of denying the humanity of Chriſt.

In other reſpects the internal ſtate of the church had now undergone a fatal change. Superſtition advanced with rapid ſtrides; and made ſucceſsful inroads into every quarter. The reverence ſhewn to the memory and example of thoſe holy men, who had ſuſtained martyrdom for the religion of Chriſt, had been carried in the

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preceding century to excefs. Their tombs had been felected as places of prayer: and the fanctity afcribed to the fpot where their remains were depofited was gradually extended to the remains themfelves. The evil, once eftablifhed, augmented daily. A pilgrimage to the fepulchre of a martyr was now efteemed moft meritorious. Feftivals in commemoration of the fufferers were multiplied. The places of their burial were explored with unwearied ardour. Pious frauds relative to fuch difcoveries became frequent. Earth brought from Paleftine and other fcenes held in veneration was efteemed a potent remedy againft the violence of evil fpirits, and fold at a very high price. The worfhip of reliques and of images commenced. Prayers for the dead became common; as likewife the belief in the exiftence of a purgatorial fire deftined to purify the fouls of the departed. The Lord's fupper was occafionally celebrated at the tombs of martyrs, and at funerals: a practice which led to the fubfequent ufage of maffes performed in honour of the faints and for the benefit of

the dead. And the groundwork for the future adoration of the bread and wine was prepared by the cuſtom of holding them up, previouſly to their diſtribution, for the religious contemplation of the people. The gaudy ceremonies of Heathen idolatry were transferred or accommodated to the ſervice of the Chriſtian church. Chriſtianity was tortured that it might ſeem to agree with the doctrines of the Platonic ſchool; and was defended by ſubtleties, ſophiſtry, and invective. Two moſt abominable maxims prevailed: the one, that deceit and falſehood for the advantage of the church were virtues; the other, that obſtinate error in religion was juſtly puniſhable by civil penalties and corporal inflictions. Monkiſh inſtitutions were formed into a ſyſtem. The ſolitary Aſcetics diſperſed in the caves and deſerts of Upper Egypt were perſuaded to incorporate themſelves into a ſociety by Antony, who preſcribed a code of rules for their obſervance. The practice immediately paſſed into Paleſtine and Syria; and advancing into Meſopotamia, ſpeedily overſpread the Eaſt.

Italy

Italy and the neighbouring iſlands, Gaul, and other provinces of Europe in ſucceſſion, became filled with monaſteries. In different monaſteries different rules were purſued: and the auſterities of the Orientals exceeded thoſe of the Europeans. Such however was the general prepoſſeſſion in favour of an inſtitution, which exchanged the innocent pleaſures and the natural connections and charities of life for a moroſe and gloomy ſuperſtition: that when Jovinian, an Italian monk, taught that all perſons who fulfilled their baptiſmal vows, and lived conformably to the Goſpel, were equally acceptable to God, and equally entitled through Chriſt to the rewards of futurity, with thoſe who lived in ſolitude, celibacy, and mortification; he was condemned by the church at Rome, and by a council at Milan, and baniſhed by the emperor Honorius.

In the beginning of the fifth century the Roman Empire was divided into two portions. The Weſtern Empire, comprehend-

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ed, under Rome its capital, Italy, Gaul, Britain, Spain, the neighbouring part of Africa, and other provinces of the Weſt. The Eaſtern, called alſo the Greek Empire, becauſe it included the dominions of ancient Greece, compriſed Aſia, and the neighbouring parts of Europe, together with Egypt; and had Conſtantinople for its metropolis. The Weſtern Empire was now aſſailed with redoubled violence by the Northern barbarians, who had for a conſiderable time haraſſed and endangered its frontiers. The banks of the Rhine and the Danube no longer oppoſed a ſucceſsful barrier. Fortreſſes and legions were ſwept away before the military deluge. Goths, and Huns, and Quadi, and Heruli, with many other ſavage ſwarms, puſhing each other forward in ſucceſſion, even from the diſtant regions of Tartary, poured in their myriads through the breach. Province after province was rent from the declining ſtate. At length, A. D. 476, Odoacer, king of the Heruli, having vanquiſhed Auguſtulus, the laſt emperor of Rome, extinguiſhed

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the Weſtern Empire, and eſtabliſhed his own dominion over Italy. Seventeen years afterwards Odoacer was killed, and his dominions ſeized by Theodoric, king of the Oſtrogoths. The new monarchs faintly profeſſing a nominal ſubordination to the emperor of the Eaſt, ruled in perfect independence.

In theſe convulſions the Chriſtians underwent peculiar ſufferings: as they not only ſhared in the common miſeries of the times; but had alſo to encounter the cruel uſage which their religion drew upon them from the invaders, who were principally Pagans. By degrees however their new maſters embraced the religion of Chriſt. But that circumſtance did not in every inſtance prevent perſecution. Genſeric, king of the Vandals eſtabliſhed in Africa, was a bigoted adherent to Arianiſm; and eagerly perſecuted the Chriſtians of a different perſuaſion. Among the troubles of this age the calamities of the Britiſh church muſt not be diſregarded. When the Roman legions had

had retired from Britain to the defence of the more important parts of the empire; the natives of the ſouthern portion of the iſland, unable to repel the ſanguinary inroads of the Scots and Picts, applied for aſſiſtance, A. D. 449, to the Saxons. Vortigern, the Britiſh king, ſoon found his German allies more formidable than the enemies whom they had vanquiſhed. New armies of Saxons arrived: and their purpoſe to ſeize the country for their own uſe became apparent. A bloody war took place; and having continued with various ſucceſs during one hundred and thirty years, ended deciſively in favour of the Saxons. Multitudes of the ancient inhabitants fled into Wales or to the continent. In the courſe of theſe conflicts vaſt numbers of the Britiſh Chriſtians were put to death with the ſevereſt tortures by their idolatrous aſſailants; and the religion was almoſt extinguiſhed. Ireland in the mean time received the light of the Goſpel. Palladius, who was ſent thither by the Roman pontiff Celeſtine,

for the converſion of the people, dying after a laborious and unſucceſsful miſſion, was replaced by Succathus, better known by the name of St. Patrick, a native of Scotland. He arrived A. D. 432; converted great numbers of the Iriſh; and after a miniſtry of forty years founded the archbiſhopric of Armagh. During theſe tranſactions Chriſtianity continued to gain ground in the Eaſtern empire over the remnants of Paganiſm: but had to ſuſtain a ſanguinary perſecution of ſix years from the Perſian monarch Vararenes.

In the courſe of this century new hereſies and ſchiſms co-operated with the unſubdued remains of thoſe which already exiſted to trouble the peace and impair the charity of Chriſtians. The Donatiſts, ſometimes proſperous, ſometimes driven into obſcurity, continued, though their affairs declined on the whole, to afflict Africa. The Arians, flying before the Imperial edicts, ſpread their tenets among the Goths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, and other barbarous

barous tribes. At Rome, and in the Eaſt, Pelagius, a Britiſh monk, denying the original depravation of human nature at the fall, and the neceſſity of the aid of Divine grace to enable man to arrive even at the higheſt degrees of piety and virtue, became the head of a ſect. Controverſies ſtill more vehement were excited, firſt by Neſtorius biſhop of Conſtantinople; and afterwards, by Eutyches, abbot of a convent in the ſame city. Neſtorius, who is to this day held in the higheſt eſteem among the Chriſtians of Syria aud the adjacent countries, having publiſhed his diſapprobation of the title of "Mother of God," which was frequently aſcribed to the Virgin Mary; was accuſed of dividing the divine and human natures of Chriſt into two diſtinct perſons, and condemned by a general council and baniſhed. The ſentiments aſcribed to him he denied to the laſt: and at any rate, though his preſumption and violence are unqueſtionable, was treated with harſhneſs and injuſtice, being condemned unheard, his explanations of his doctrine not being

even read, nor any attention paid to his offers of ſubmiſſion. In oppoſing Neſtorianiſm Eutyches plunged into the oppoſite extreme of excluding the human nature of our Redeemer. The predeſtinarian opinions attributed to Auguſtine were alſo the ſource of warm diſcuſſion. Ignorance in the mean time attended the progreſs of the uncultivated ſubverters of the Weſtern empire. And both in the Weſt and Eaſt the ſuperſtitions of the preceding century took firmer root, and extended their branches far and wide. Departed ſaints were aſſiduouſly invoked; and, in order to conciliate their protection, their very images were honoured with religious worſhip. Reliques of martyrs were valued more and more: pilgrimages augmented: ceremonies encreaſed in number and oſtentation: auſterities became more extravagant and ſenſeleſs (z). In the deciſion of religious controverſies

(z) Among the fanaties of this age the pillar-ſaints were the moſt remarkable and the moſt venerated. Simeon, denominated Stylites, (from a Greek word ſignifying

troverſies it was adopted as a ſtanding law, even in councils, to determine queſtions according to the ſentiments of the plurality of the ancient doctors, who had left behind them an opinion applicable to the ſubject.

It is now time to attend to the conduct and authority of the biſhops of Rome. Antecedently to the reign of Conſtantine, while a new capital of the world had not yet ariſen on the ſhores of the Helleſpont; the biſhop of the metropolis eaſily obtained not only a precedence in dignity over all his brethren of the provinces, but ſome degree of juriſdiction over ſuch of them as

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fying a column,) is recorded to have paſſed thirty-ſeven years on the top of five ſucceſſive pillars; the firſt of which was ſix cubits high, and the laſt forty. His reputation, and the fame of his miracles, was unbounded: and the deſire of imitating him extreme. The practice continued in the Eaſt even to the twelfth century. In the Weſt it was never permitted to eſtabliſh itſelf. Wulfilaicus, an imitator of Simeon, having erected a pillar in the vicinity of Treves; the neighbouring biſhops ordered it to be pulled down.

were ſtationed within his reach. The power which by his rank, his magnificence, his princely revenues, and his ſacred character he had acquired over the people of Rome, rendered him by degrees dreaded and courted by the emperors. His authority was in conſequence enlarged. He received about A. D. 379, by an edict from the emperors Valentinian and Gratian a ſomewhat undefined yet apparently ſupreme juriſdiction over the church of the Weſtern empire. The pope thenceforward iſſued decretal epiſtles; appointed vicars in the provinces; cited the biſhops to Rome; convoked general councils; and openly announced himſelf as head and ſovereign of the univerſal church (*a*). From Theodoſius and Valentinian III. he obtained, A.D.445, another edict (*b*) confirming in the

(*a*) In proof of theſe facts, and of others to be mentioned, ſee Sir Iſaac Newton's Obſervations on the Prophecies of Daniel, chap. viii.

(*b*) See the edict in Sir I. Newton as above: which, though recogniſing in the moſt extravagant terms the power claimed by the pope, aſcribes it not to *Divine right*, but to the grants of preceding emperors.

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ampleſt manner theſe enormous pretenſions: which we find fully recogniſed within ſome few years in the letters of the Gallican biſhops; and aſcribed to the pope on the very grounds on which he reſted his claim, namely, as being ſucceſſor to the inheritance and the ſovereignty of St. Peter. But when a rival of Rome became the ſeat of empire, at the oppoſite extremity of Europe; the prelate of the ancient capital ſurveyed with an eye of jealous indignation the growing honours and authority of his brother of Conſtantinople: and exerted himſelf with the utmoſt vigour to uphold a pre-eminence, which the latter laboured with equal zeal to ſhake off. Every weapon which preſented itſelf was employed to check the riſing independence of the Eaſt. When the provincial biſhops who were ſubjected to the patriarchal ſee of Antioch, or of Alexandria, felt their rights invaded by their rulers; when thoſe patriarchs themſelves perceived their inability to reſiſt the lordly prelate of Byzantium: the Roman pontiff heard with delight the

complainants appeal to himſelf. As yet however he contended in vain. He ſaw the weight of the Eaſtern emperors thrown into the ſcale of his competitor. He ſaw, Aſia, Thrace, and even the Illyrian ſhores of the Adriatic, ſubjected to the Oriental biſhop. He ſaw that biſhop triumphant over his moſt violent efforts, A. D. 451, in the council of Chalcedon: and crowned by its decrees with rights and honours in every reſpect equal to thoſe which had been conferred on the eccleſiaſtical ſovereign of Rome. The unchriſtian ſpirit of theſe ambitious rivals inflamed their partiſans throughout Aſia and Europe: and moſt efficaciouſly contributed to excite diſſenſions and virulence and a worldly temper in the church.

CHAP. X.

ON THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY FROM THE SUBVERSION OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE TO THE END OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

CLOVIS, the king of the Franks who had fixed their reſidence in Gaul, had embraced the Chriſtian faith, A. D. 496. Hence a more willing ear was lent in the beginning of the next century by his ſubjects to the preaching of Remigius: and numerous converts profeſſed the Goſpel. Converts multiplied alſo among the Heruli, the Alani, and other barbarous nations of the Weſt: and in the Eaſt among the Abaſgi, who bordered on Mount Caucaſus. It is however to be feared that many of the new Chriſtians were imperfectly acquainted with the doctrines, and ſtill more imperfectly with the ſpirit, of the religion which they adopted. And

the converſion of vaſt numbers of Jews in France, Spain, and Libya, appears to have been effected rather by menaces and violence than by the influence of fair argument on the underſtanding. Columbas, an Iriſh monk, paſſing as a miſſionary into Scotland, laboured among the natives with ſucceſs. In England alſo the foundations of the true faith were laid afreſh. Ethelbert, monarch of Kent, the moſt powerful of the cotemporary Saxon princes, was gradually diſpoſed towards Chriſtianity by his queen Bertha, the daughter of Cherebert, king of Paris. At this period, A. D. 596, the Roman pontiff Gregory, ſurnamed the Great, ſent Auguſtine, at the head of forty Benedictine monks, to preach the Goſpel. The king and the greater part of his ſubjects were baptiſed: and Auguſtine became the firſt archbiſhop of Canterbury. In other parts of the iſland the idolatrous Saxons continued to exerciſe unrelenting cruelties againſt the antient inhabitants, who retained the Chriſtian faith. In Italy the kingdom

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of the Oſtrogoths was deſtroyed, A.D. 566, by Narſes, the general of the Eaſtern emperor Juſtinian: and Rome, transformed into a dukedom, and degraded from the rank of a capital, was ſubjected to the lieutenant of that monarch, who reſided with the title of exarch at Ravenna. Two years afterwards a new revolution, terrible to the Chriſtians, ſupervened. A Pagan army of Lombards ruſhing from Pannonia, overwhelmed Italy: and, with the exception of Rome and Ravenna, having maſtered the whole country, and eſtabliſhed their kingdom at Ticinum, grievouſly afflicted the followers of the Goſpel. In a ſhort time, however, they embraced the religion which they had oppreſſed. Autharis, their third monarch, adopted A. D. 587, the tenets of Arianiſm: and his ſucceſſor acknowledged the Nicene faith. During the courſe of theſe tranſactions Perſia upheld its eſtabliſhed character for cruelty to the Chriſtian name. Choſroes, its monarch, denouncing vengeance not only againſt

againſt the perſon but againſt the God of Juſtinian, ſlaughtered the Chriſtians with every aggravation of torture, which inhumanity and impiety could furniſh.

Not many new controverſies of moment broke forth in this century. Of the old ſects, Arianiſm, after a ſhort triumph, received a blow from which it never was able to recover, by the expulſion of the Italian Goths and the African Vandals before the arms of Juſtinian; and by the defection of Reccared, a Spaniſh ſovereign, and of other princes. The Donatiſts alſo, having loſt the protection of the Vandals, finally dwindled, after a concluding effort, into oblivion. But the advantage which the church gained in theſe reſpects was balanced by the ſtill encreaſing prevalence of ignorance and ſuperſtition. In the Weſt, the little learning which remained was confined within the walls of the monaſteries. It was by the protection of thoſe walls that the manuſcripts of the claſſical authors, though neglected, were preſerved; and

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have deſcended with the ſacred records of antiquity to a happier age. The tranquillity and the taſte of the Eaſtern empire were rather more favourable to ſcience and literature; yet were unequal to the prevention of their decline. Additional rites, no leſs trivial than cumbrous, and uſages fitted only to lead men from looking for ſalvation through a life of Chriſtian holineſs, disfigured and tended to explode true religion both in Europe and in Aſia. The honour due unto God was transferred more and more to ſaints. An opinion was induſtriouſly circulated by a corrupted and avaricious prieſthood, that the forgiveneſs of ſins was to be purchaſed by liberality to monaſteries and convents, which multiplied daily: and that the irreſiſtible interceſſion of departed ſaints would be exerted for the man, who had enriched the temples dedicated to their memory. After ſtating this fact, it is almoſt needleſs to add that vice rapidly encreaſed among the clergy as well as among the laity. The biſhops of Rome

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and of Conſtantinople were ſtill antagoniſts. The tidings that John, prelate of the latter city, had aſſumed the title of œcumenical, or univerſal biſhop, ſtruck Pelagius the Roman pontiff with horror. Rouſing himſelf at length to repel the fatal blow, he declaimed by his repreſentative Gregory (who afterwards became pope) againſt the blaſphemy of the title; and thundered againſt his daring rival the portentous appellation of Antichriſt. Perhaps he forgot that his own predeceſſors, whoſe rights he was thus eager to maintain, had long claimed the juriſdiction implied in the name of univerſal biſhop; and had aſſumed the kindred denomination of head of the univerſal church. At this period, however, the Gothic kings of Italy, no leſs than the Eaſtern emperors, denied the unlimited authority of the pontiff; and exacted from him various tokens of ſubmiſſion.

The ſeventh century witneſſed the extenſion of the Chriſtian faith in the Eaſt to China and the remoteſt parts of Aſia,

chiefly by the labours of the Neſtorians. In the Weſt the faith of the Goſpel became univerſal throughout our own iſland; whence it was carried to Batavia, and other parts of the continent. Compulſory converſions of the perſecuted Jews were urged forward by the emperor Heraclius: and by the monarchs of Gaul and Spain, in the face of the avowed diſapprobation of the Roman pontiff. Darkneſs and ignorance overſpread the Chriſtian world, under the auſpicious aid of the ſubtleties of Ariſtotelian logic. The vices of the monaſtic clergy augmented with their riches. The ſuperſtitions of the preceding age multiplied. Penitential diſcipline was formed into a ſyſtem; and became generally recogniſed as a full expiation for ſin. By a law of pope Boniface V. the churches were rendered places of refuge to all perſons, who ſhould fly to them for protection: and thus became public aſylums for the moſt abandoned criminals. To the turbulent remains of ancient diviſions the new ſect

of

of Monothelites was added; and tormented and perlexed the Eaſt and the Weſt with metaphyſical diſputes concerning the unity of will in the two natures of Chriſt. In the courſe of this controverſy pope Honorius, and his Monothelite doctrine were formally condemned in the preſence of the papal legates by the general council of Conſtantinople: a circumſtance which has produced no ſmall embarraſſment to Roman Catholic writers, who have felt themſelves bound by their faith to uphold the perfect infallibility both of general councils and of popes. The claims however of papal ſupremacy were urged with ſuch unceaſing ardor, that Boniface III. ſought and obtained, A. D. 606, from the emperor Phocas, one of the moſt deteſtable of tyrants, that very title of œcumenical or univerſal biſhop; the deſire of which, Gregory, his predeceſſor in the ſee of Rome, had ſtigmatiſed in John of Byzantium as a characteriſtic of Antichriſt. Yet much oppoſition continued to be made to them by

temporal

temporal ſovereigns. Pope Martin, having treated the Imperial edicts with extreme contempt, in conſequence of their being favourable to Monothelitiſm, of which, unlike to the future pope Honorius, he was a bitter enemy; and having ſolemnly anathematiſed and conſigned to the devil and his angels the Monothelites and their patrons; was ſeized, at the command of the enraged emperor Conſtans, by the exarch of Italy, and detained priſoner for a year, with much cruel uſage, in the iſle of Naxos. The ancient Britons and the Scots diſtinguiſhed themſelves by perſeverance in maintaining their religious independence.

In the midſt of theſe contentions, and from a remote and diſregarded corner of the Eaſt, a new and tremendous ſcourge of Chriſtianity had ariſen. Mahomet had eſtabliſhed his impoſture in Arabia. Born of the nobleſt family of the moſt honourable tribe among his countrymen, yet beſet with indigence and obſcurity, he paſſed his early years in the humble occupations

of a camel-driver and of a commercial agent to a wealthy widow; until he was raiſed to diſtinction by becoming the huſband of his employer. In the political and religious ſituation of the inhabitants of Arabia he perceived an opening, by which a daring, and ſagacious, and unprincipled adventurer might arrive at unlimited dominion. Divided into a number of unconnected and hoſtile tribes, the Arabians were not likely to unite into a general confederacy againſt any perſon, who might appear to aim at ſuperiority over one or two tribes. The very enmity of ſome was likely to conciliate to him the friendſhip and aſſiſtance of others. Thoſe whom private and national antipathies had thus ſeparated, were kept aſunder ſtill more widely by differences in religion. Arabia, the land of freedom, was peopled with diſcordant ſects of every perſuaſion. With Jews it abounded as early as at the day of Pentecoſt; and had received numbers of fugitives from the arms of the Romans. In many parts of the country Chriſtianity

had made powerful advances. Among ſome tribes the religious tenets of the Magi had been introduced from Perſia. The reſt of the people, though generally holding the unity of God, were abſorbed in idolatry. But Jews, Chriſtians, and idolaters were enveloped in univerſal ignorance. What then might not be hoped by a deceiver, who ſhould cautiouſly lay before the Arabians as coming from God a form of religion dextrouſly accommodated to the leading tenets of the different parties, on whoſe ignorance he wiſhed to impoſe? On this foundation, and according to this plan, Mahomet erected his ſuperſtructure. Having attracted during ſome years the public attention by frequent retirements to a cave in a mountain in the neighbourhood of Mecca, the city where he reſided; he at length announced himſelf, A. D. 609, privately in the outſet, and to his own family, as a prophet inveſted with a Divine commiſſion to eſtabliſh true religion upon earth. His ſacred doctrine and inſtitutions he profeſſed to receive from Heaven by

the communication of the angel Gabriel. He imparted them to the world in the Koran; the chapters of which he produced in ſlow ſucceſſion during three and twenty years: and uſually for the evident purpoſe of meeting ſome emergency in his affairs, or of authoriſing the gratification of his licentious paſſions. Diſcarding all myſteries as adverſe to his proſpect of ſucceſs, he unremittingly inculcated the tenet in which all deſcriptions of his hearers were diſpoſed to agree, the unity of God. The Jews he conciliated by upholding the Divine authority of the Old Teſtament: the Chriſtians he allured by paying ſimilar reſpect to the New. Moſes and Chriſt he averred to have been ſent as forerunners of himſelf; and to have predicted his approach and his ſuperiority, in paſſages which had been blindly miſunderſtood, or malicioufly corrupted or expunged. Pretenſions to miraculous powers he warily diſclaimed. Miracles, he ſaid, had been proved, by the examples of Moſes and of Chriſt, ineffectual to ſecure the reception of truth.

truth. Unbelievers he menaced with unſpeakable and eternal anguiſh in a future life. To believers he promiſed the everlaſting pleaſures of a ſenſual paradiſe. But he reſerved the higheſt enjoyments and glories of the world to come for thoſe who ſhould expend their poſſeſſions or their blood in ſupport of his religion. The tardineſs of his progreſs might have driven a leſs reſolute impoſtor to deſpair. Fourteen proſelytes were the fruit of three years. Some years afterwards the number ſcarcely exceeded one hundred (*a*). The rage of his enemies conſtrained him to ſave his life by flight from Mecca, A. D. 622: an event from which the Mahometans date their era, denominated the Hegira, or the Flight. His fortunes now changed. He was received at Medina as a prince and a prophet. Converts and adventurers flocked to his ſtandard. Laying aſide the tolerating language which his feebleneſs had inſerted into the earlier parts of the Koran; he de-

(*a*) Gibbon's Hiſtory, 4to. vol. v. p. 220, &c.

clared himſelf ſent forth to eſtabliſh true religion, the belief in the unity of God and in himſelf as the apoſtle of God, by the ſword. Againſt all Infidels, he declared war. To idolaters, he offered converſion or death. To the followers of Moſes and of Chriſt, a more liberal choice was offered. "Ye Chriſtian dogs (*b*), ye know your "option: the Koran, the tribute, or the "ſword." Such was the addreſs uſual among his ſucceſſors to their enemies of the Eaſtern Empire. Victory and defeat were alike converted by Mahomet into engines for conſolidating his power. The one was a ſpecial proof of his Divine miſſion; the other a puniſhment on the incredulity of his followers. At length his arms were everywhere triumphant. He was enthroned in Mecca, and acknowledged

(*b*) Dog was, and ſtill remains, the common term of infamy appropriated to unbelievers by the Mahometans. "The Grecian dog" was the uſual title of the emperor of Conſtantinople. See Ockley's Hiſtory of the Saracens. The letter of the caliph Harun al Raſhid to the emperor Nicephorus is addreſſed, "To the Roman Dog." Gibbon, vol. v. p. 433.

and

and obeyed throughout all Arabia as a Divinely appointed lawgiver and ſovereign. Tranquil at home, he looked around for conqueſt. Paleſtine he invaded; and fixed his eye on the fertility of Syria. But his career was arreſted, A. D. 632, by death. The tide of victory, however, flowed on without interruption. Succeeding caliphs trod in his footſteps. Frantic with religious zeal and the thirſt of plunder, and ſteeled againſt fear and danger by a belief in the moſt rigid predeſtination; innumerable hoſts of Saracens, ſo termed from a principal tribe of the Arabians, ruſhed forth on all ſides. Within ſix years after the death of Mahomet, Syria, after the deſtruction of immenſe armies diſpatched for its protection, was completely wreſted from the emperor Heraclius; who publicly acknowledged that the flagrant wickedneſs of the Chriſtians had juſtly withdrawn from them the protection of their God. Egypt and Perſia ſpeedily bowed to the ſame yoke. The whole extent of Africa as far as the Atlantic

was ſubdued by the commencement of the following century. Croſſing the ſtreights of Gibraltar, A. D. 710, the victorious Saracens invaded Spain: and having in the courſe of ſome few years reduced that kingdom, paſſed forwards, A. D. 721, over the Pyrenean mountains into France, and occupied all the ſouthern provinces. But theſe inſtruments of Divine vengeance began now to exceed in this direction the limits of their commiſſion. Preſſing on to the very centre of France, they were defeated near Tours, with dreadful and deciſive ſlaughter by Charles Martel, A. D. 732; and the remains of their forces were driven back into Spain. In the mean time their armies from Aſia had twice beſieged Conſtantinople itſelf. The firſt ſiege commenced A. D. 668, and laſted during ſeven ſucceſſive ſummers. During the winter months the aſſailants regularly retired to the iſle of Cyzicus, where they had eſtabliſhed their magazines. The city proved impregnable; but was obliged to purchaſe peace

peace by a tribute. The attempt was ineffectually renewed by the Mahometans, from A. D. 716, to A. D. 718.

During the courſe of the eighth century the calamities of the Eaſt were continued. The Turks, a ſavage nation of Tartarian deſcent, ruſhing from the ſolitudes of Mount Caucaſus, overran Colchis, Iberia, Albania, and Armenia: and having vanquiſhed the Saracens in thoſe quarters, turned their fury againſt the Greeks. During the laſt twenty years of this century, and in the beginning the next, Aſia Minor was cruelly ravaged by the Caliphs, and tribute again exacted from the emperor of Conſtantinople. But no calamities appear to have retarded the progreſs of ſuperſtition and vice. A new controverſy concerning the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt embroiled the Greek and Latin Chriſtians with each other; the Orientals maintaining that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father only, the Weſtern Churches, from the Father and the Son. A diſſenſion ſtill more vehement broke forth reſpecting

reſpecting images. Bardanes, the Greek emperor, A. D. 712, having removed from the church of St. Sophia a picture of the meeting of the ſixth general council, becauſe that aſſembly had condemned his favorites, the Monothelites; ſent orders to Rome for the adoption of ſimilar proceedings. The Roman pontiff, not ſatisfied with manifeſting his indignant contempt by a formal rejection of the Imperial edict; commanded ſix pictures repreſenting the ſix general councils to be placed in the porch of the cathedral of St. Peter: and ſummoning a council at Rome, cauſed the emperor to be condemned as an apoſtate from the true faith. Leo the Iſaurian, a ſucceeding emperor, ſhocked at the idolatrous worſhip paid to images, and at the conſequent reproaches and ſarcaſms poured out againſt the Chriſtians by Mahometans and Jews, commanded the ſtatues, A. D. 726, to be removed out of the churches. A civil war in ſeveral parts of his dominions was the reſult. Pope Gregory, without ceremony, excommunicated the emperor, as the Greek

writers

writers all affirm, and as many learned Roman Catholic writers acknowledge: the Italian provinces ſubject to the Greek empire roſe in rebellion: and Rome, with part of the adjacent country became, in the ſame or the following year, an independent ſtate, really or nominally under the civil government of its ſenate (*c*). Leo and, in general, his ſucceſſors perſiſted in their efforts to exterminate image-worſhip: and the pontiffs were ſtill more outrageous in their exertions to uphold it. A new potentate of the Weſt, Charlemagne, who had eſtabliſhed himſelf in Imperial power over France and Germany, united with the Eaſtern emperors againſt the pontiffs in this controverſy: and in a council of three hundred biſhops aſſembled at Francfort, the worſhip of images was unanimouſly condemned: a deciſion heartily and openly approved by the Britiſh church. Charle-

(*c*) Nominally under that of its ſenate; but really, as it ſhould ſeem from the words of Sigonius, (ſee Biſhop Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 398.) under that of the Pope. "Ita Roma, Romanuſque ducatus à Græcis ad Romanum Pontificem—pervenit."

magne

magne alſo was ſucceſsful in his purpoſe of converting his enemies, the Saxons and Huns, to a profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith. Violence however was his chief inſtrument: and political expediency ſeems to have been one of his predominant motives. The perſevering miniſtry of Winfrid, a Britiſh Benedictine monk, among the Frieſlanders and Germans, appears entitled to very conſiderable praiſe. His ſolicitude, it muſt be owned, for the glory of the Roman pontiff equalled his zeal for the glory of Chriſt: and his proceedings were in ſeveral reſpects highly objectionable. But he purſued his labours during forty years: and was at length murdered, with fifty of his aſſociates, by the barbarians.

In the Weſt the privileges and the wealth of the clerical order became enormous. The future puniſhments of ſin might be prevented, it was ſuppoſed, by liberality to God and the ſaints; in other words, to the churches and monaſteries. Hence the accumulations of a life of rapine, and the

treaſures

treaſures that had ſurvived a life of profligacy, were alike transferred on a death-bed to the monks. Emperors, kings, and princes expiated their crimes by inveſting biſhops and churches with the poſſeſſion and ſovereignty of caſtles, cities, and provinces. The higher eccleſiaſtics, now become temporal potentates, were ſeen clad in armour at the head of armies of their vaſſals. The Roman pontiff, advancing daily in ſtrength, and extolled as a ſort of god throughout the Weſtern world, by the innumerable ſwarms of monks devoted to his cauſe and received under his ſpecial protection, reared his head aloft above the ſovereigns of the earth. His conduct to the Eaſtern emperor has been related. An opinion was encouraged and eſtabliſhed, that any perſon excommunicated by the Pope forfeited not only his civil rights but the common privileges of humanity. Pepin, firſt officer to Childeric III. king of France aſpired to the crown: and convened and conſulted, A. D. 751, the ſtates of the realm. By the direction of the ſtates ambaſſadors

were

were diſpatched to the pontiff to ſolicit his deciſion on the queſtion; "whether "the divine law did not permit a valiant "people to dethrone an indolent and pu- "ſillanimous ſovereign, and to elect a "more worthy ſucceſſor." The Pope pronounced in the affirmative: Childeric was depoſed, and Pepin appointed king. Three years afterwards the ſucceeding pontiff repaired to France; confirmed his predeceſſor's deciſion; abſolved Pepin from his allegiance to Childeric; and, having crowned him, requeſted his aid againſt the Lombards. Pepin complied; marched into Italy; and conſtrained Ariſtulphus, the vanquiſhed king of the Lombards, to engage to ſurrender for ever to the Pope and his ſucceſſors in the ſee of Rome, the Exarchate of Ravenna and its dependencies. On the retreat of the conqueror Aiſtulphus retracted, and beſieged Rome. The Pope renewed his application to Pepin, with menaces of excommunication in caſe of tardineſs (*d*).

(*d*) See the words quoted by Sir I. Newton, Obſervations on Daniel, p. 79,—"pro datâ ſibi potentiâ, ali "enandum fore a regno Dei & vitâ eternâ."

Pepin

Pepin obeyed, and compelled the Lombards to an immediate performance of the agreement. From this time, A. D. 755, the Pope, acknowledged as a temporal ſovereign, no longer dated his epiſtles and bulls by the years of the reign of the Eaſtern emperor. A ſubſequent invaſion of the Lombards added, A. D. 774, another crown to the pontiff. Charlemagne, the ſon of Pepin, flew to his aid, overturned the Lombard empire, and beſtowed ſome of its provinces on the Pope. Towards the cloſe of the century, A. D. 796, Charlemagne, was ſolicited by the Pope to reduce by his interpoſition the Roman people to allegiance to the holy See (*e*). In the conſequent diſſenſions which aroſe at Rome, the Pope being ſeized, impriſoned, and formally accuſed, eſcaped to Charlemagne; who, on his arrival at Rome, A. D. 800, preſided in a council of French and Italian biſhops convened to judge the cauſe. The council, however, without entering into the matter,

(*e*) To bind them by oath "in fide & ſubjectione." Sir I. Newton's Obſervations, p. 81.

declared

declared that the Pope, the ſupreme judge of all men, was above being judged by any other than himſelf. Averring, therefore, his innocence, he was deemed acquitted. Charlemagne, by the influence of the Pope over the Roman people, was now gratified in his deſire of being elected emperor of the Romans. In return he beſtowed on the Pope full juriſdiction, ſubordinately to his own Imperial pre-eminence, over Rome and its territories. Theſe three principalities, Rome and its dependencies, the Exarchate of Ravenna, and the Lombard provinces, are cited and ſolemnly confirmed by oath to the pontiffs in a ſubſequent grant of Louis the Pious, ſon of Charlemagne, to be held of the Roman emperor for the uſe of the church. Amidſt theſe ſolid acquiſitions the victory of the pontiff, A. D. 787, in the ſecond council held at Nice in Bithynia over the Iconoclaſts (the breakers of images) and the enemies of his ſupremacy, ſcarcely deſerves notice: nor the loſſes which he ſuſtained through the indignation of the Greek emperors, who confiſ-

cated his treaſures, and aboliſhed his juriſdiction, in Sicily and other provinces of their dominions.

In the ninth century the Saracens, maſters of the greater part of Africa, and of Aſia, even to the extremities of India, awed numbers of the Chriſtians into apoſtaſy; and cruelly haraſſed the ſtedfaſt ſervants of Chriſt. In the remnant of the Grecian empire religious diſſenſions prevailed. The diſputes concerning the proceſſion of the Holy Spirit continued. Violent perſecutions, ultimately productive of a civil war, were inſtituted by the emperors of Conſtantinople againſt the Paulicians, a ſect eſtabliſhed in Armenia, and charged with Manichæan tenets; yet ſtedfaſt in maintaining, among various errors, one excellent but moſt offenſive doctrine, the unlawfulneſs of worſhipping the Virgin Mary. The controverſy reſpecting images was alſo upheld in the Eaſt with uncertain ſucceſs until A. D. 842: when a council at Conſtantinople deciſively pronounced in favor of

idolatry: and the whole Eaſt, Armenia excepted, adored without further ſtruggle the victorious mediators of wood and ſtone. Among the Latins the ſame unchriſtian practice ſlowly yet perceptibly gained ground againſt vigorous oppoſition. New foundations for a complete ſchiſm between the Eaſtern and Weſtern churches were laid by the appeal of Ignatius, the depoſed patriarch of Conſtantinople, to the Roman pontiff; by the proud interference of the latter; and by the reciprocal excommunications fulminated by the Roman and the Byzantine prelate againſt each other. The doctrine of the Myſtics, who profeſſedly aimed in their fanatical precepts at the total abſtraction of the ſoul from earthly objects and its union in an ineffable manner with the Deity, having long been in high eſteem among the Greeks, eſpecially among the monaſtic orders, now invaded and infected the Latin provinces. The doctrines too of predeſtination and reprobation obtained adherents. Another and an entirely new diſcuſſion was ſuperadded by Paſchaſius Radbert,

Radbert, a German monk; who ſtepped forward from his cloiſter, and confounded the world by aſſerting the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation. Gorgeous ceremonies, reverence for reliques, the ſubſtitution under countleſs ſuperſtitions of the ſhew of religion for the reality, increaſed with the growing darkneſs of the times. Trials by fiery ordeal, by water, by ſingle combat, by the croſs (*f*), advanced in repute. The canonization of ſaints became frequent: and Europe was deluged with legendary accounts of their miracles and their merits. The monaſtic clergy continually deſerved leſs and obtained more of public eſtimation. Monks and abbots crowded the courts of princes; and occupied civil employments wholly foreign to their profeſſion. The apparent limits of the Chriſtian world were

(*f*) The contending parties ſtretched out their arms in the form of a croſs: and the cauſe was gained by him who perſevered during the longer time in that poſture. In the trial by water, the accuſed perſon, having his right foot and left hand bound together, was thrown naked into water. If he ſank, he was acquitted: if he floated, condemned.

in ſome parts extended, in others curtailed. Crete and Sicily were completely ſubdued by the Saracens; who twice puſhed their victorious incurſions to the walls of Rome. The Pagan Normans, iſſuing from the Baltic, not only infeſted the coaſts and iſlands of the German ocean; but carried their ravages and maſſacres into Spain and Italy; and forcibly obtained permanent ſettlements in France and other countries. Such of them, however, as were eſtabliſhed in the neighbourhood of Chriſtian ſtates gradually embraced the goſpel. And the labours of ſome eminent miſſionaries, particularly of the celebrated Anſgar, in Sweden, Denmark, and the adjacent regions, though inculcating a greatly corrupted ſpecies of Chriſtianity, appear to have flowed from good motives, and to have been generally conducted in an equitable manner, and to have been crowned with important ſucceſs. About the ſame period Chriſtianity was introduced, at one time in a laudable method, at another by the aid of compulſion, among the Ruſſians and Sclavonians. In England

the

the great Alfred diſtinguiſhed himſelf as much by his earneſt endeavours to diffuſe religious knowledge among his ſubjects as by his other noble undertakings.

The Roman pontiff now ſucceeded after repeated ſtruggles in throwing off a badge of ſubordination, by which he felt himſelf degraded. Hitherto, after the election of a Pope by the ſacerdotal order and the voice of the people of Rome, the Imperial ſanction was neceſſary to authoriſe his conſecration. But Charles the Bald, in return for the important aid of the pontiff in the acquiſition of the dignity of emperor, exempted the ſucceſſors of his benefactor from that humiliating neceſſity. The Popes of this century are in general memorable for ambition and for crimes. Taking advantage of the frequency of competitors for the Imperial throne among the poſterity of Charlemagne, they uſurped additional prerogatives with reſpect to the election of an emperor. They extorted by degrees from the European princes a ſurrender of the

ſupreme authority in religious affairs, originally poſſeſſed by the temporal ſovereign. They ſucceſsfully inculcated a perſuaſion, that the biſhop of Rome was appointed by Jeſus Chriſt to be ſupreme legiſlator and judge of the univerſal church: that other biſhops conſequently derived all their authority from the Pope: and that councils could not determine any point without his permiſſion and conſent. To uphold theſe aſpiring pretenſions, ſo repugnant to the ancient and not yet forgotten rules of eccleſiaſtical government, the authority of oſtenſible proofs appeared requiſite. What truth could not furniſh, fraud ſtood ready to ſupply. Conventions, acts of councils, decretal epiſtles, and other ſimilar records were fabricated: and ſo fabricated as to repreſent the ſee of Rome to all appearance inveſted in the firſt ages of the church with the plenary right and exerciſe of ſupremacy. By many, and particularly by the French biſhops, theſe impious manœuvres were diſcerned and detected: and vehement oppoſition was made

to

to the reception of the forgeries as laws of the church. But the obſtinacy of the Popes, eſpecially of Nicholas I. prevailed. Active reſiſtance ſeemed at an end. Tyranny and impoſture were left to range at large: and the boldeſt ſpirit ſcarcely looked to the poſſibility of reviving the dying liberties of the church.

The tenth century, according to the teſtimony even of Roman Catholic writers, ſurpaſſed all preceding ages in ignorance and in flagitiouſneſs. Baronius himſelf terms it an iron and a leaden age; an age in which Chriſt ſeemed, as it were, to ſleep, while the ſhip was covered by the waves. Genebrard ſpeaks of it as diſtinguiſhed, in conjunction with half of the next century, for producing near fifty Popes more like to apoſtates than apoſtles (*g*). The profeſſion, indeed, of Chriſtianity in a very corrupt form was introduced by the Neſtorians of Chaldea among a tribe of Tartars. Poland alſo and Norway heard of the

(*g*) See Bp. Newton's Diſſertations, vol. iii. p. 156, 157.

Goſpel: Denmark and Hungary ſaw an increaſe of its profeſſors. But the religion preached was that of popery; and the ſword was frequently the inſtrument of converſion. In the Eaſt the Chriſtians were trodden down by the Saracens: in the Weſt they endured the perſecuting vengeance of the unconverted or apoſtatiſing barbarians of Sarmatia, Sclavonia, and ſome parts of Germany. The multiplication of ſaints and of ceremonies was immenſe: the practice of piety and of good works, and the dependence on Jeſus Chriſt the only mediator between God and man, proportionally ſmall and declining. On the Virgin Mary in particular new acceſſions of idolatrous honours were accumulated. The worſhip of images was univerſal. When every church exhibited a repreſentation of the Supreme Being in a human form; it is not ſurpriſing that in ſome inſtances the Anthropomorphite hereſy revived. Towards the concluſion of the century Europe trembled with the apprehenſion, originating in a miſinterpretation

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of a paſſage in the Apocalypſe, that the end of the world was at hand. In many places temples and palaces, as no longer needed, were pulled down or left to decay. Multitudes of people, abandoning their families, occupations, and property, flocked to Paleſtine, the expected ſcene of the advent of Chriſt. The favour of God and the ſaints was ſought by donations to the vicegerents of heaven, the ſacerdotal and monaſtic orders, whoſe vices became undiſguiſed. The juriſdiction of abbots and other leading eccleſiaſtics extended itſelf: and of none more than of the Roman pontiff. Yet the doctrines upheld, and the claims advanced, by the biſhop of Rome had to encounter ſome oppoſition. The decrees of the councils of Francfort and Paris againſt the worſhip of images had not in all parts loſt the whole of their force. Tranſubſtantiation was denied by many; eſpecially by Alfric in England, who among other writings pointed againſt this doctrine, diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a homily for Eaſter, which was wont to be read in all the churches,

churches. Several countries retained the uſe of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue: and in England they were tranſlated by the command of Athelſtan into Saxon. In England too, and elſewhere, the celibacy of the clergy was condemned. In a ſummary of Chriſtian faith and practice publiſhed by a council held A. D. 909, at Troſly near Soiſſons, neither a belief in the ſupremacy of the Pope, nor in the ſacrifice of the maſs, nor in purgatory, nor in additional ſacraments, nor in the duty of confeſſion to a prieſt, nor of worſhipping created beings, obtains a place. Even kings and biſhops were found who reſiſted the papal ſupremacy. An edict prohibiting the election of a pontiff without the previous knowledge and conſent of the emperor was promulgated by Otho the Great about the middle of this century; and remained in force until the commencement of the next. Gerbert, archbiſhop of Rheims, affirmed in a council held in that city, A. D. 991, that a Pope, if he acted amiſs, was liable to the cenſures of the church; and after intimating

timating that John XV. the reigning pontiff, was deſtitute of charity, pronounced him to be in that caſe "Antichriſt, ſitting "in the temple of God, and ſhewing him-"ſelf that he is God." Had Gerbert then foreſeen his own future elevation to the Papal throne; perhaps he might have expreſſed himſelf with greater caution.

The eleventh like the preceding century was an age of ſhame, darkneſs, and calamity to the church of Chriſt. Converts, it is true, were multiplied among the Tartars by the Neſtorians: Sicily was regained from the arms and the faith of the Saracens: and ſome of the Pruſſians were perſuaded, and more dragooned, into a profeſſion of the Goſpel. To balance theſe victories, the Saracens in Spain, and in part of Aſia; and the Turks, who in their turn had ſtripped the Saracens of many of their conqueſts, and had torn from the Grecian emperor his faireſt provinces bordering on the Euxine ſea; enſnared or perſecuted into apoſtaſy great numbers of Chriſtians. And

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the Pagans of the Northern countries of Europe omitted no opportunity of wreaking their vengeance on the Chriſtians within their reach. In the mean time new monaſtic orders aroſe in the Weſt; and the ſubtilties of a metaphyſical theology, commonly termed ſcholaſtic divinity, advanced in repute; and afforded to ignorance and to artifice fit weapons for upholding the groſſeſt ſuperſtitions of popery. The conteſt between the Latin and the Greek church proceeded from bitter animoſity to an open ſchiſm. The patriarch of Conſtantinople, A. D. 1053, enraged at the efforts of the pontiff to reduce the Oriental patriarchs under his dominion, accuſed the Roman church, in a public letter, of various errors. The Pope Leo IX. iſſued a moſt imperious reply; aſſembled a council at Rome; and ſolemnly excommunicated the Greek churches. The Grecian emperor, whom political exigences rendered not unfavorable to Rome, invited Leo to ſend legates to Conſtantinople, that an agreement might be eſtabliſhed. Leo complied. But the

legates,

legates, enraged at the ſteady reſiſtance made to the arrogant pretenſions of their maſter, publicly excommunicated the Greek patriarch, with all his adherents, in his own cathedral: and laying on the altar a written record of their imprecations and anathemas, ſhook the duſt off their feet, and returned to the Pope. The patriarch retaliated by a ſimilar excommunication.

To reſcue the Holy Land, the ſcene of the miniſtry, the miracles, and the ſufferings of Chriſt, from the profane power of the Mahometans; and to terminate the inſults and oppreſſions endured by the ſwarms of pilgrims, who repaired thither from all quarters of the Chriſtian world; were objects which had long excited the ſolicitude of the pontiffs. Near the cloſe of the preceding century Sylveſter II. had ineffectually exhorted the potentates of Europe to take up arms for the attainment of theſe purpoſes. Gregory VII. raiſed to the Pontificate, A. D. 1073, re-

ſolved to undertake the holy war in perſon; and had already muſtered fifty thouſand followers, when his attention was abſorbed by other wars hereafter to be noticed. The enthuſiaſm at length of Peter the Hermit ſounded the alarm throughout Europe. He deſcribed in the moſt pathetic terms the miſeries which he had beheld inflicted on the Chriſtians in Paleſtine; and rouſed the avenging zeal of every faithful ſon of the church by producing a letter, addreſſed to all true Chriſtians, which he averred to have been written in heaven. Urban II. ſeized the favorable moment. His ſpeech in the council of Clermont before two hundred biſhops, four thouſand inferior eccleſiaſtics, and three hundred thouſand laymen, was received as a declaration of the will of God. A countleſs multitude aſſumed the croſs, the badge of this enterpriſe of fanaticiſm and injuſtice: and the unwieldy hoſt proceeded, A. D. 1096, in different bodies, towards the city of Conſtantinople, which trembled at the tidings of the approach of eight hundred thouſand armed men.

men. Myriads, however, after ſignaliſing their march in the ſacred expedition by unparalleled rapine and flagitiouſneſs, periſhed by famine and the ſword before they reached the borders of the Helleſpont. Additional myriads periſhed in their courſe through Aſia Minor and Syria. But the ſurvivors, ſtill forming an immenſe army, were deſcried, A. D. 1099, from the walls of Jeruſalem advancing under Godfrey, duke of Lorrain, from ſubordinate conqueſts to the ſiege of the Holy City. In five weeks it was taken. The ſovereignty of the new Chriſtian kingdom was conferred on the truly heroic and excellent Godfrey.

The effects of theſe enterpriſes on the religious ſtate of the European Chriſtians were moſt lamentable. An enormous acceſſion of wealth inſtantly accrued to the monaſteries and churches. In order to obtain the prayers of monks, and thus to ſecure the protection of ſaints, on a diſtant and perilous expedition, the moſt ample donations were beſtowed; and ſatisfaction was eagerly

eagerly tendered for all real or ſuppoſed injuries offered to the church by the individual himſelf or by his anceſtors. The ſanctity of the undertaking began alſo to be conſidered as an atonement for all tranſgreſſions of the divine law, and a certain paſſport to heaven. Biſhops and abbots girded on the ſword: and the vicious clergy whom they left behind diſcovered that the abſence of their ſuperiors was the removal of reſtraint. Unknown ſaints and martyrs, ſome of whom had never exiſted, were imported in numbers from Syria into the Weſtern church; and ſhared the worſhip that had been monopoliſed by the ancient occupiers of the calendar. The armies which returned from the conqueſt of the Holy Land came loaded with ſaintly reliques, ſome of them the reliques neither of ſaints nor of human beings; but all purchaſed at high prices from the unfailing magazines of the artful Greeks and Syrians, who ſmiled and exulted at the credulity of Europe.

In

In this century the Roman pontiffs roſe in defiance of civil and eccleſiaſtical oppoſition, and of the internal conteſts between rival claimants of the papal throne, to the zenith of their power. In the commencement of it they received the magnificent appellation of Maſters of the World, and Popes, or Univerſal Fathers: preſided by their legates in all councils: aſſumed the right of deciding every controverſy reſpecting doctrine and diſcipline; and reſolutely defended their uſurpations againſt princes and kings. Leo IX. who ſucceeded to the pontificate, A. D. 1048, led the way to the claims urged with unremitting vehemence by his immediate ſucceſſors, of diſtributing and taking away kingdoms, and of being temporal as well as ſpiritual ſovereigns of the world. On the Normans, ſettled in Italy, he formally conferred the lands which they had wreſted or were preparing to wreſt from the Greek emperor and the Saracens. But the boldeſt efforts of preceding popes loſe their ſplendor when compared with

the exploits of Gregory VII. known by the name of Hildebrand, who was elected to the pontificate A. D. 1073. He unceaſingly purſued an enterpriſe which his predeceſſors had in vain laboured to accompliſh, the ſubjugation of the whole weſtern world to a uniform reception of the Roman ceremonies and forms of worſhip; and to the performance of that worſhip in the Latin language, now become an unknown tongue. His life was occupied by a ſteady plan of rendering all ſovereigns his tributary vaſſals. Saxony he claimed as a feudal tenure under the Roman ſee. He told Philip I. king of France, that his kingdom no leſs than his ſoul was under the dominion of St. Peter; in other words, of his pretended ſucceſſor the Roman pontiff. But the tribute which he demanded was denied. He ordered William the Conqueror, who, when about to invade England, had deſired the ſanction of papal authority, to do homage for that kingdom, and to pay up the arrears of Peter-

pence.

pence (*b*). The arrears were paid; the homage was ſternly refuſed. Among the Chriſtian kingdoms gradually forming againſt the Moors in Spain, a country which Gregory affirmed in his letters to have belonged from time immemorial to the ſee of Rome, though by a grant which he ſaid had been loſt with other ancient records, he had more ſucceſs. The tribute required was annually paid. The kings of Hungary and of Denmark, and the princes of Germany, he openly exhorted to ſurrender their territories to the apoſtle Peter, and to hold them as dependencies of the Roman biſhop. He induced the ſon of Demetrius king of the Ruſſians to come to Rome; and to make a ſimilar ſurrender of the kingdom, which he was to inherit from his father. He raiſed the duke of Croatia to the regal title, upon the terms of an annual tribute. He excommunicated and

(*b*) Peter-pence was a tax of a penny per houſe originally appropriated to the ſupport of an Engliſh college at Rome, but afterwards converted by the popes to their own uſe.

depoſed Baſiſlaus II. king of Poland, who had aſſaſſinated the biſhop of Cracow; and prohibited the nobles and clergy of Poland from electing a new king without his conſent. He deprived the emperors of the privilege, never ſince regained, of ratifying the election of the Roman pontiff. He engaged the princeſs Matilda to ſettle her great Italian and other poſſeſſions on the ſee of Rome. Enraged at the oppoſition which Henry the emperor of Germany preſumed to make to the new edict reſpecting Inveſtitures (*i*); he commanded that prince inſtantly

(*i*) When biſhoprics and abbeys had become of great value, princes began not only to confer them on unworthy favourites, but to ſell them. To counteract theſe manœuvres, the clergy, to whom the right of election originally belonged, adopted the practice, on any vacancy, of inſtantly electing and conſecrating a ſucceſſor. The prince ſoon diſcovered a method of eluding this reſtraint. On the death of a biſhop or abbot, he required the ring and croſier of the deceaſed to be delivered to him; knowing that inveſtiture by their means was eſſential to conſecration. He could then make his own terms. Gregory, indignant at theſe ſimoniacal contracts; at the interference of the temporal power in the choice of eccleſiaſtical rulers; and at the ſacrilegious profanation of the ring and croſier by

inſtantly to repair to Rome and clear himſelf from the charge. Henry ſummoned the German biſhops to Worms, and induced them to pronounce Gregory depoſed from the pontificate. Gregory in return excommunicated and depoſed Henry; rouſed ſeveral of the German princes to take arms againſt him; obliged the unfortunate monarch to paſs three days in the depth of winter in the open air, with bare feet, his head uncovered, and his body nearly naked, at the papal threſhold, waiting for abſolution; and finally confirmed the election of a new emperor, Rodolph. On the ſudden death of Rodolph, A. D. 1080, the miſeries of the civil war continued, and the affairs of Henry revived. Another pope was elected in oppoſition to Gregory. On the death, five years afterwards, of the latter, whoſe character is ſtained with private vice no leſs than with inordinate ambition, a

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by the unſanctified touch of a layman; promulgated an anathema againſt thoſe who ſhould receive the inveſtiture of a biſhopric or abbacy from lay hands, and alſo againſt the perſons performing ſuch inveſtiture.

ſucceſſor of his party was choſen: and two hoſtile popes agitated Europe until the end of the century.

Even in this age, blind and bigoted as it was, the corrupt doctrines of popery were reſiſted and attacked. The edicts of the tyrannical Gregory VII. againſt the marriage of the clergy raiſed commotions in Germany; and were ſtrongly oppoſed in France, in Flanders, in Italy, and in England. Berengarius of Tours contended againſt tranſubſtantiation, with unequal conſtancy, but with ſignal ſucceſs. In the face of perſecution he ſhamefully and repeatedly retracted his opinions: but, according to the complaint of the monkiſh hiſtorians, he had corrupted with his *hereſy* almoſt all the French, Italians, and Engliſh. And the Albigenſes, whoſe tenets will be conſidered in reviewing the ſucceeding century, already began to attract notice.

The twelfth century, though the learning and ſcience of the age, ſuch as they were, began

began to receive the active ſupport of the princes and great men of the Weſt, and flouriſhed ſtill more under Imperial patronage at Conſtantinople; diſplayed the ſame features which had characteriſed preceding times. Pomerania, the iſle of Bregen, Finland, and Livonia, were inſtructed in Chriſtianity by the ſword. Againſt the Pagans of the latter province the pontiff Urban III. proclaimed a holy war. Three ſucceſſive biſhops led the armies, which were raiſed chiefly in Saxony, to accompliſh the work of converſion: and in conjunction with the military order of knights-ſword-bearers, inſtituted afterwards by the direction of pope Innocent III. for the ſame ſalutary purpoſe, ſucceeded in arrogating to themſelves and their aſſociates the plunder of Livonia, and in extorting from the inhabitants a nominal profeſſion of the popiſh corruptions of the Goſpel. In the eaſtern parts of Aſiatic Tartary, John, a Neſtorian prieſt, taking advantage of the death of a Tartarian monarch, acquired by force of arms the vacant throne. Aſſuming the name of Ungchan,

though he is better known by his original appellation of Preſbyter (or Preſter) John; he announced by embaſſies to his Chriſtian brothers the Greek and Roman emperors his ſuperiority in grandeur and in power to every other monarch of the earth. The ſplendid boaſt expired in the days of his ſucceſſor; who was overwhelmed by the reſiſtleſs force of the celebrated Tartar, Genghis Chan. The conqueror, turning his armies againſt the Turks and Saracens, reduced Cathay, Perſia, and part of India and Arabia under his dominion.

Tidings in the mean time arrived in Europe of the declining ſtate of the Chriſtian kingdom of Paleſtine; and of the cruel, and as they were termed, unprovoked, perſecutions, which the profeſſors of the Goſpel in the Eaſt endured from the Saracens. The pontiffs re-echoed the intelligence from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. At length, A. D. 1147, Louis VII. king of France, and Conrad III. emperor of Germany, departed for the Holy Land at the head of immenſe

immenſe armies; with the diſgraced and feeble remains of which they returned two years afterwards to Europe. The kings of Jeruſalem ſtruggled in vain againſt the ſkill and bravery of Saladin. Guy of Luſignan, the laſt monarch, fell in battle, A. D. 1187: and the city in the ſame year ſurrendered to the victor. To repair this calamity, a third expedition was conducted, A. D. 1189, by the German emperor Frederic the firſt. After ſome ſucceſſes, he was drowned: his ſon and the greater part of the army were ſwept away by peſtilence: the remainder returned in miſery and deſpair. In the following year Philip Auguſtus king of France, and Richard I. king of England, proceeded by ſea with their armies to the Holy Land. After the reduction of Acre, a city rendered then, as in the preſent year, memorable by a moſt obſtinate defence, the former returned to Europe. Richard, weakened by every victory which he gained, and alarmed by the domeſtic perfidy of his brother, concluded a truce, A. D. 1192, with Saladin, and quitted Paleſtine,

leſtine, with his whole army. During theſe conflicts between the Chriſtians and the Mahometans three eminent military orders aroſe: the knights hoſpitallers of St. John of Jeruſalem; the knights Templars; and the Teutonic knights of St. Mary. The knights Hoſpitallers, originally united for the relief of indigent and diſeaſed pilgrims arriving at Jeruſalem, acquired ſuch vaſt reſources from the donations of princes and of wealthy ſubjects, that they took upon themſelves, with the approbation and authority of the pontiff, the obligation of perpetual hoſtility againſt the followers of Mahomet. In the final ruin of the Chriſtian affairs in Paleſtine they retired firſt to Cyprus, and thence to Rhodes; and being expelled in the ſixteenth century from the latter iſland by the Turks, received from the emperor Charles V. a grant of Malta, which they ſtill retain. The knights Templars were alſo bound to protect pilgrims, and the Chriſtian cauſe, by force of arms. The Teutonic knights, who were all to be Germans

mans of illuſtrious birth, contracted a ſimilar engagement; and were characteriſed at firſt, by rules of auſterity and frugality, which ſpeedily melted away before the influence of growing wealth. The two latter orders will be noticed again.

In this century many of the popes ſhewed themſelves worthy ſucceſſors of Gregory VII. Paſcal rekindled the diſſenſions concerning inveſtitures, A. D. 1102, by freſh excommunications againſt the emperor Henry; whoſe rebellious ſon was afterwards abſolved from his allegiance, and ſupported in his unnatural war againſt his father by the ſame pontiff. Succeeding emperors, popes, and antipopes, for there were repeatedly two cotemporary claimants of St. Peter's chair, prolonged the calamities of this conteſt by temporal as well as ſpiritual arms; until it was at length adjuſted, A. D. 1122, by a compromiſe. The right of election was relinquiſhed by the emperor: that of inveſtiture, but by the ſceptre, not by the ring and croſier, was conceded

to

to him by the pope. New ſchiſms, commonly occaſioned by turbulence of parties at Rome, divided the papacy: and the competitors were variouſly acknowledged by different kingdoms. New conteſts alſo aroſe between the pope and the emperor, each eager to reduce the power of the other; in which the emperor was, according to cuſtom, excommunicated and depoſed. The king of England too, Henry II. received his allotment of the general humiliation. Becket, archbiſhop of Canterbury, having acceded, A. D. 1164, to certain rules, called the conſtitutions of Clarendon, which limited ſome of the exorbitant privileges of the clergy, repented; and ſuſpended himſelf from his eccleſiaſtical office, until he ſhould receive abſolution for his offence from the pope. Violent contentions enſued; and Becket retired to France. An apparent reconciliation at length took place between the prelate and the king. The archbiſhop returned to his ſee; and perſiſted in his former meaſures with inflexible arrogance. The king, then in Normandy,

heard

heard the account, and dropped expreſſions of indignation. Four knights of his court liſtened and departed. The king ſuſpected their purpoſe: but the meſſenger whom he diſpatched in purſuit of them was too late (*j*). The archbiſhop was aſſaſſinated before the altar. Henry, in obedience to the mandate of the enraged pontiff, preſented himſelf barefooted and proſtrate before the ſhrine of Becket, now revered as a ſaint and martyr; ſpent the day in faſting and prayer, and the night in watching by the holy reliques; aſſembled the monks of the chapter; put a ſcourge into the hands of each; and received on his naked back the laſhes which they ſucceſſively inflicted. In ſeveral reſpects the authority of the church and the pope increaſed in ſtrength. A decree, in force at this day, was paſſed under Alexander III. excluding the Roman people from all power in the election of a pontiff, and veſting the right of voting excluſively in the cardinals. At the ſame time ſpiritual wars were firſt declared againſt heretics.

(*j*) See the account in Hume's Hiſtory of England.

The right of nominating and canonizing ſaints was monopolized by the pope. But his greateſt and moſt pernicious acceſſion of power was that of indulgences. Various biſhops had for ſome time augmented their revenues by ſelling to tranſgreſſors theſe remiſſions of eccleſiaſtical penalties. The politic popes diſcerned the advantage; aſſumed nearly the whole of the traffic to themſelves; and extended it from the temporal chaſtiſements of the church to the future puniſhments of hell. This prerogative, firſt employed for the encouragement of the cruſades, was vindicated by the blaſphemous doctrine, now invented, and improved in the next century; that the Roman pontiff was inveſted with a power of transferring to any one a portion of an immenſe treaſure of ſuperfluous merit, which the ſaints by their pious deeds had accumulated, over and above what was requiſite for their own ſalvation.

When ſins might thus be expiated by money, and ſuperſtitions of every kind were patronized; the vices of the clergy in general,

general, as well as of the laity, advanced to a height of iniquity ſcarcely credible. Corruption ſo glaring in doctrine and in practice excited the indignant oppoſition of thoſe whom it had not blinded. Multitudes now bore witneſs in behalf of genuine Chriſtianity. Among theſe the Albigenſes, ſo denominated from Albi, a town in France, or Vallenſes and Waldenſes, from the vallies of Piedmont which they occupied, and ſometimes Leoniſts, from a merchant of Lyons, Peter, ſurnamed Valdo in conſequence of his exertions in their ſupport, were the moſt conſpicuous. They are ſaid in part to have originated from the Paulicians, who, retiring into Thrace from the perſecution of the Grecian emperors, proceeded through Bulgaria into Italy and the neighbouring parts of Europe. The Albigenſes are loaded by many of their enemies with the imputation of Manichean and other abominable tenets. The truth probably is, that ſome of the ſects into which they were ſubdivided, and others improperly

claſſed with them by the church of Rome, which indiſcriminately branded its oppoſers with the denomination of Albigenſes; held with many juſt opinions others which were erroneous. To their ſuperior virtues, however, the atteſtations of their adverſaries are afforded (*k*). Among their leading doctrines we find theſe particularly ſpecified: that ſcripture is the rule of faith: that the ſcriptures ought to be open in the vulgar tongue to all: that there are only two ſacraments: that maſſes for the dead are abſurd, and the worſhip of ſaints and the dead, idolatry: that purgatory is a human invention: that monaſtic inſtitu-

(*k*) One writer againſt them ſays: "Sunt in moribus "compoſiti & modeſti: ſuperbiam in veſtibus non ha-"bent," &c.—Another, "Præter hæc quæ contra fidem "religionemque noſtram aſſumunt, in reliquis fermè "puriorem quam cæteri Chriſtiani vitam agunt. Non "enim niſi coacti jurant; raròque nomen Dei in vanum "proferunt; promiſſàque ſua bonâ fide implent," &c. Another, "In moribus & vitâ boni ſunt; veraces in "ſermone; in caritate fraternâ unanimes." Biſhop Newton's Diſſertations, vol. iii. p. 174, 175, notes.

tions,

tions, and the multiplicity of feſtivals and ceremonies are injurious to religion: that the marriage of the clergy is lawful and neceſſary: that the pope is entitled to no ſupremacy: that the church of Rome is the antichriſtian church deſcribed in the Revelations. The hiſtorian Thuanus, a catholic, honeſtly diſcriminates between the doctrines which the Albigenſes held, and thoſe which were falſely aſcribed to them. And Mezeray, alſo a catholic, deciſively characteriſes them thus: "They "had very nearly the ſame opinions as "thoſe perſons who are now called Cal-"viniſts;" the uſual term in France for proteſtants (*l*).

In ſome of the northern and eaſtern parts of Aſia, Chriſtianity, though gradually declining in the face of Mahometan power, ſtill retained, in the thirteenth century, numerous diſciples. Embaſſies alſo were ſent by the Roman pontiffs to the emperors of the Tartars, who had ravaged

(*l*) Biſhop Newton's Diſſertations, vol. iii. p. 175. 177. and ſee the notes.

Hungary and the adjoining countries: and Tartarian ambaſſadors preſented themſelves in return before the council held at Lyons. The intercourſe produced the eſtabliſhment of Roman catholic congregations among the heathen; as well as much benefit to the papal cauſe among the Neſtorians, many of whom adopted the doctrines and owned the ſupremacy of Rome. The Chriſtian ſovereigns in Spain enlarged their kingdoms daily at the expence of the Moors. The Pruſſians, obſtinate in Paganiſm, were invaded by the Teutonic knights; and, after a bloody conteſt of fifty years, acknowledged the religion and the ſovereignty of the victors. Lithuania endured the ſame cruelties, and ſubmitted to the ſame yoke. The diſtreſs of the Chriſtians in Paleſtine at length overcame the growing reluctance of Europe to Eaſtern campaigns. The firſt expedition conſiſting of French and Venetians, realiſed the apprehenſions of the Greek emperor; who had repeatedly trembled for his ſceptre, on the approach of the armies of the Weſt.

They

They ſtormed Conſtantinople, A. D. 1203, originally for the purpoſe of reinſtating the rightful prince who had been dethroned: but on his murder in the following year, they ſeized the city for their own benefit, and elected Baldwin, count of Flanders, emperor of the Greeks. His claim was diſputed by the native emperors, who choſe Nice in Bithynia for their capital; and after a conteſt of fifty-ſeven years recovered Conſtantinople, A. D. 1261, and put an end to the Eaſtern empire of the Latins. In the mean time Andrew, king of Hungary, with other princes, had conducted new armies, A. D. 1217, to the aid of Paleſtine, and commenced their operations in Egypt. After ſome ſucceſſes, they experienced the fate of preceding undertakings. Frederic II. emperor of Germany, renewed the enterpriſe, A. D. 1228: and by treaty in the following year, obtained from the ſultan of Egypt the poſſeſſion of the city and kingdom of Jeruſalem. New ſuccours,

however, became indiſpenſable: and, after two intervening and unfortunate expeditions, the one under the king of Navarre, A. D. 1239; the other in the ſubſequent year under Richard, Duke of Cornwall, and brother to the Engliſh king, Henry III.; the French monarch Louis IX. landed, A. D. 1249, with a moſt formidable army in Egypt. After the capture of the ſtrong city of Damietta a fatal reverſe overwhelmed him. Defeated in a bloody action, he was taken priſoner; and only a handful of his forces returned to France. Impelled by miſguided piety, he reſumed the attempt, A. D. 1270: and, commencing his operations againſt the Mahometans with the ſiege of Tunis, periſhed with the greater part of his army by a peſtilence. No future ſovereign trod in his footſteps. The Chriſtian kingdom of Paleſtine rapidly declined; and was extinguiſhed, A. D. 1291 by the capture of Acre.

Innocent III. who filled the papal chair during the firſt ſixteen years of this century,

tury, equalled the moſt ambitious of his predeceſſors in zeal to eſtabliſh the favorite maxim of Rome; that the pope was by divine right ſupreme lord of the world, and the fountain of all authority eccleſiaſtical or civil. He claimed for the Holy See the power of diſpoſing of biſhopricks, abbeys, and canonries, leſt heretics ſhould intrude into the church of Chriſt. He reduced under his juriſdiction the prefect of Rome, who until this period had taken an oath of allegiance to the emperor. He made himſelf maſter of Ancona, Spoletto, and other Italian cities. In Aſia he gave a king to Armenia. In Europe he conferred the regal dignity on the duke of Bulgaria; and alſo on Peter of Arragon, who had rendered his dominions tributary to Rome. Philip, king of France, he anathematiſed into compliance with his mandates. Succeſſive emperors of Germany he excommunicated and depoſed. But the weight of his fury fell on John, king of England. John refuſed to recogniſe, as archbiſhop of Canterbury cardinal

Langton, whom the pope by his fiat appointed to that dignity. Innocent laid the kingdom under an interdict (*m*): followed the interdict by a bull abſolving the ſubjects of John from their allegiance, and commanding all men to ſhun him as excommunicated: declared by another bull the throne vacant, and exhorted Philip of France to invade the kingdom, and unite it for ever to his dominions: and by a third bull excited all Chriſtian princes to aid Philip in the enterpriſe, and beſtowed on every perſon who ſhould promote it the ſame plenary remiſſion of all ſins as was granted to thoſe who engaged in cruſades againſt the Mahometans. The French monarch made immenſe preparations: and was already graſping in idea the ſceptre of England, when Innocent dexterouſly ſeized it for himſelf. John, alarmed and enſnared by the arts of the legate Pandulf, formally

(*m*) The immediate effects of an interdict were, that the celebration of Divine Worſhip was ſuſpended, and the churches were ſhut up: no ſacrament, except baptiſm, was adminiſtered: the dead were buried in highways without funeral rites.

ſur-

ſurrendered his kingdom to the See of Rome. After detaining the crown and other enſigns of royalty five whole days, the legate returned them to John, now a papal vaſſal, who did homage and ſwore fealty to the repreſentative of Innocent; preſented to him, as a mark of dependence, a ſum of money, which the latter proudly trampled under his feet; and bound himſelf and his ſucceſſors, on pain of forfeiture of the crown, to pay the ſtipulated annual tribute to Rome. The ſucceſſors of Innocent imitated him with varying ability. Emperors continued to be depoſed, and kingdoms to be granted. The pontificate of Gregory X. was ſignaliſed, A. D. 1274, by the ſubjugation of the Greek church to the See of Rome, through the influence of Michael Palæologus, emperor of Conſtantinople; who regarded the protection of the pope as a ſecurity againſt a renewal of the Latin invaſions. But the ignominious treaty was renounced ten years afterwards by the Greeks; who ſaw their

emperor, like his brethren of the Weſt, excommunicated by the Roman pontiff.

During the courſe of theſe tranſactions, the papacy dictated new laws to the church; and added to its encreaſing wealth and territories additional ſupports, which rendered moſt important ſervice. By Innocent III., A. D. 1215, tranſubſtantiation was ſolemnly pronounced an indiſpenſable article of faith, and auricular confeſſion an indiſpenſable duty. He promulgated at the ſame time, and equally without deigning to conſult any individual, ſixty-eight other decrees extending and confirming the papal power. The decree reſpecting tranſubſtantiation naturally introduced the idolatrous adoration of what was now blaſphemouſly called the deified bread. Boniface VIII. enacted, that whoever ſhould viſit, in the concluding year of each century, the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome with ſentiments of contrition, ſhould thus obtain the plenary remiſſion

remiſſion of ſins. His ſucceſſors in later times, perceiving the luſtre and the riches which the centenary crouds of pilgrims added to the church, graciouſly reduced by degrees the period to twenty-five years. But greater things remain to be ſtated. In the courſe of the century there aroſe ſeveral orders of mendicant friars; men who diſclaimed endowments and revenues, and profeſſed voluntary poverty. The contraſt which their ſeeming humility exhibited to the luxury and pomp of other monaſtic orders; and its reſemblance to the lowly circumſtances of Chriſt and his apoſtles, won the public favor. But the two orders founded, the one by Dominic, a Spaniard, the other by Francis, an Italian, took the lead in general eſtimation: and notwithſtanding their bitter conteſts with each other for pre-eminence, and the internal hoſtilities no leſs bitter of the Franciſcans among themſelves, they not only reigned unrivalled in the unintelligible jargon of ſcholaſtic divinity, but almoſt monopoliſed

until

until the reformation the chief offices in the church and in the ſtate. The popes, whoſe policy had long been accuſtomed to favour the monks, in order to preſs down into due ſubordination the influence and authority of biſhops; warmly patroniſed the Dominicans and the Franciſcans. The protection was abundantly repaid by ceaſeleſs exertions for the extenſion of the papal power. Theſe exertions came very opportunely. Heretics, that is to ſay, opponents of Rome, conſiſting partly of the Albigenſes and ſimilar ſects, partly of blind or criminal fanatics, ſwarmed on all ſides. Againſt theſe enemies the Dominicans in particular, whoſe avowed object was to extirpate error and to deſtroy heretics, declared war. This expreſſion was by no means figurative. Innocent III., exaſperated at the unwillingneſs or the incapacity of the biſhops to repreſs the numerous adverſaries of popery in Savoy, Dauphinè, and the reſt of the dominions

of

of Raymond earl of Thoulouſe, diſpatched thither ſpecial legates for the extirpation of hereſy. They were joined, A. D. 1206, by Dominic; and by the ſole authority of the pope inflicted capital puniſhment on thoſe whom they could not reclaim. They were ſpeedily diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of inquiſitors. Senſible of the value of their ſervices, ſucceeding pontiffs eſtabliſhed ſimilar officers in every ſuſpected city, and reduced the ſyſtem into form. Gregory IX., however, A. D. 1233, committed the inquiſitorial office and juriſdiction excluſively to the Dominicans. Thus aroſe the tremendous tribunal of the inquiſition; which ſoon renouncing the common forms of trial borrowed at firſt from courts of juſtice, arrayed itſelf in darkneſs, and let looſe its mercileſs tortures on the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of guilt. But with reſpect to the heretics of Thoulouſe, Innocent waited not for the tardy operations of theſe miniſters of vengeance. The extirpation by fire and ſword of the devoted

voted victims he committed, A. D. 1207, to the king of France and his armies, under the promiſe of the moſt ample *indulgences*: and ſhortly afterwards commiſſioned the Ciſtercian monks to proclaim, as from himſelf, throughout France, this cruſade againſt Chriſtians. A formidable army of croſs-bearers took the field, A. D. 1209, under the eye of a papal legate, and the command of Simon earl of Montfort. Raymond, at one time trembling under excommunication, at another provoked to deſperation by the ambitious deſigns of Montfort, was alternately the deſtroyer and the defender of his ſubjects. The war, in which Louis IX. ultimately embarked with the utmoſt ardour, continued many years with various ſucceſs, but with unrelenting barbarity againſt the oppoſers of the pontiff. Victory at length crowned the ſupporters of the church. And the earl of Thouloufe ſaw the pious labours of the pope and the French king rewarded

warded with no ſmall portions of his dominions (*n*).

(*n*) In this century Robert Greathead, biſhop of Lincoln, diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his exertions againſt papal tyranny and the vices of eccleſiaſtics. Matthew Paris, a cotemporary monk of St. Albans, relates his dying diſcourſes, in which the prelate ſtigmatiſed the pope as an heretic and antichriſt; and concludes with ſtyling him "the refuter of the pope, reprover of prelates, corrector "of monks, director of prieſts, inſtructor of the clergy, "and the hammer to beat down the Romans into con-"tempt." When excommunicated by the pope, he appealed to the tribunal of Chriſt. See biſhop Newton's Diſſertations, vol. iii. p. 181.

CHAP. XI.

CONTINUATION OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

THOUGH the Chriſtian world had ſtill continued, during the two preceding centuries, overwhelmed with the darkneſs of papal night; ſome glimmerings of twilight had begun to appear. We now advance to times in which the indications of approaching dawn continually grew ſtronger; until at length it broke forth and brightened into the radiance of perfect day.

During the fourteenth century ſeveral pontiffs laboured to rekindle the flame of the cruſades againſt the Saracens. But, after ſeveral antecedent diſappointments, they had the mortification to ſee the laſt of the armies about to be embarked for Paleſtine diſperſed, A. D. 1363, by the death of its leader John, king of France.

The Mahometan power in different quarters daily became more formidable. Among the Aſiatic Tartars, one of whoſe chans had now honoured the pope with a ſolemn embaſſy to Avignon; and in China, whoſe capital Cambalu, the preſent city of Pekin, was the reſidence of an archbiſhop, Chriſtianity was extirpated by the victorious Timur Beg, who faithfully exerted againſt the profeſſors of the Goſpel the perſecuting ſpirit of the Koran. In Conſtantinople the neceſſity of the aſſiſtance of the Weſt to withſtand the encroaching hoſtility of the Turks was ſo apparent, that ſcarcely any ſacrifices for the purpoſe of obtaining it were thought too great. Three ſucceſſive embaſſies were ſent to different pontiffs to prepare the way for the union of the two churches. Rome, at length, beheld within her walls, A.D. 1367, the Grecian patriarch negotiating for his own ſubmiſſion to the pope. The patriarch was followed two years afterwards by a nobler ſuitor, the Greek emperor himſelf. But the majority of his ſubjects dreaded

and

and abhorred the Turk leſs than the pontiff: and the treaty evaporated in furious debates.

Though ſeveral of the pontiffs of this century exerted themſelves no leſs fiercely than their predeceſſors in excommunicating and depoſing emperors and kings; and extended under the names of reſerves and proviſions the claims of the papacy to fill up eccleſiaſtical vacancies of all kinds and in every quarter: the authority of the holy ſee encountered ſome ſhocks by which it was manifeſtly impaired. The firſt of theſe concuſſions took place in the quarrel between the popes and the king of France. Boniface VIII. having acquainted the world in a memorable bull, that the ſucceſſor of St. Peter ruled the earth, by Divine right, with the temporal ſword, no leſs than the church with the ſpiritual; and that every man who preſumed to queſtion this doctrine was excluded from the poſſibility of ſalvation: was accuſed, A. D. 1303, of hereſy and other crimes, by the command

of the French monarch Philip the Fair; and afterwards ſeized and wounded by one of the officers of Philip. On the ſubſequent vacancy of the papal chair, A. D. 1305, Philip, by his manœuvres procured the election of Clement V. a French prelate; who, at the deſire of the king, transferred the papal reſidence from Rome to Avignon, where it continued during ſeventy years, denominated by the Italians the Babylonian captivity. By this long abſence the power of the pontiffs experienced in Italy conſiderable diminution. Formidable factions eſtabliſhed themſelves even in Rome: and many cities revolted from their allegiance. French eccleſiaſtics continued to ſucceed to the popedom; until another event gave a freſh blow to the papal authority. On the death of Gregory XI. A. D. 1378, Urban VI. was choſen to ſucceed him. But a party of the cardinals, ſpeedily repenting of the choice, profeſſed to diſcover a flaw in the election; and raiſed a rival, Clement VII. to the pontificate. Thus began the great ſchiſm, which divided the Weſtern church during

fifty years. The reverence of the Catholic world was claimed at the ſame moment by two, ſometimes by three, competitors; each aſſerting his own plenary apoſtolical authority, and fulminating anathemas againſt his oppoſers. A third ſource of detriment to the papal domination may be traced to the new hoſtilities which raged between its moſt uſeful adherents, the Dominicans and the Franciſcans concerning the antient ſubject of their diſſenſions, the abſolute poverty of Chriſt. John XXII. unfortunately decided, that Chriſt was not altogether without a certain ſpecies of property in the clothes which he wore, and the food by which he was ſuſtained. Every true Franciſcan ear tingled at the blaſphemous aſſertion. The ſame pontiff alſo preſumed to mitigate in ſome reſpects the rigid inſtitutions of St. Francis. The Franciſcans exclaimed that the rules of their founder were an inſpired Goſpel imparted to him by Chriſt, and unalterable by man. John, in a tranſport of rage, denounced his curſes on the apoſtate contemners of his

authority:

authority: and the Dominican inquiſitors were the eager inſtruments of his vengeance. Not even Jews or judicial aſtrologers were hunted with greater fury. France, Spain, Italy, Germany, ſaw numbers of the Franciſcans periſh at the ſtake. Succeeding pontiffs at laſt owned the prudence of more lenient meaſures: and by mutual conceſſions peace was reſtored between the Franciſcan order and the holy ſee. The increaſe, partly of myſtics and other fanatical ſects, partly of ſects who deſerved the yet unknown appellation of Proteſtants, muſt be enumerated as a fourth cauſe of injury to the ſovereignty of the pontiff. In every quarter the inquiſitors chaſed their victims with fury alike a ſtranger to mercy and to wearineſs. But the reviving crop ſprang up too rapidly to be kept down by the ſcythe of the church. And the liſt of the enemies of popery now acquired an unexampled force by the acceſſion of the name of Wicliff.

John Wicliff was born A. D. 1324, in the reign of Edward II. Having diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Oxford by ſupporting the privileges of the univerſity againſt the encroachments of the Mendicant Friars, ſettled within its precincts; he was appointed warden of the new college of Canterbury-Hall. Being ejected from that ſtation by the archbiſhop of Canterbury who ſucceeded the founder, he appealed to the pope. Edward III. in the mean time withdrew, with the approbation of his parliament, the tribute which John had engaged to pay to the ſee of Rome. The pope menaced; and the clergy in general clamoured on his ſide. Wicliff, in a ſpirited treatiſe, oppoſed the papal claim: and his cauſe was immediately decided at Rome againſt him. Wicliff, diſſatisfied with the ſcholaſtic commentators, had long been a diligent ſtudent of the Scriptures. Shocked at the ſcandalous lives of the monaſtic clergy, and at the temporal uſurpations of the Romiſh church; he the more eaſily became

became ſenſible of ſeveral of the doctrinal corruptions of popery. The errors which he detected were the ſubjects of his pointed animadverſion from the chair of the profeſſorſhip of divinity, to which he had now been elected. Of that poſt alſo he was in conſequence deprived. John of Ghent, duke of Lancaſter governed England at this period for his feeble father Edward III. The popiſh clergy he deteſted: and regarding Wicliff as one of their victims, took him into confidence; and ſent him with the biſhop of Bangor at the head of an embaſſy to Bruges to reclaim the national right of conferring eccleſiaſtical benefices, with the general liberties of the Engliſh church, from the papal commiſſioners; who acceded, and paid no regard, to a compromiſing treaty. The inſight which Wicliff gained on this occaſion into the proceedings of Rome, contributed to open his eyes. On his return he became rector of Lutterworth in Leiceſterſhire. Scarcely had he repaired thither, when a

proſecution for hereſy was commenced againſt him, under the auſpices of the archbiſhop of Canterbury and the biſhop of London. He was reſcued by the forcible interpoſition of the duke of Lancaſter. On the acceſſion of Richard II. the power of Lancaſter expired: and five papal bulls inſtantly reached the two prelates, the king, and the univerſity of Oxford, requiring the condign puniſhment of Wicliff. Lancaſter again contrived to ſave him. He now ſent forth into the world the noble work on which he had been for years employed, a tranſlation, the firſt complete tranſlation which ever appeared in our language, of the Bible. The clergy were thunderſtruck at the profane expoſure of the Scriptures: and the biſhops brought a bill into parliament for the ſuppreſſion of the book. Scarcely had they beheld the rejection of the bill by a great majority, when they heard that Wicliff was preaching againſt tranſubſtantiation. At Oxford they rallied their forces; procured the condemnation of Wicliff's tenets; and obliged

obliged him finally to retire from the univerſity, which he had ſtill continued occaſionally to viſit. He withdrew to Lutterworth; and died A. D. 1384. The ſeed which he had ſown made rapid progreſs during his life: and ripened after his death into a glorious harveſt (*a*).

Among the heretics of this century the firſt place would be due, if accuſations were to be accounted proofs, to the Knights Templars. Philip the Fair could not forgive the aſſiſtance which they had afforded to his enemy Boniface VIII. Of Clement V. whom he raiſed to the popedom, he required their deſtruction. At an appointed time, A. D. 1307, they were ſeized, unſuſpicious of danger, throughout Europe. Blaſphemy, apoſtacy, idolatry, and the moſt deteſtable vices, were laid to their charge. The knights who refuſed to confeſs were put to death: they, from whom tortures or promiſes obtained an acknow-

(*a*) For a full and impartial ſtatement of the opinions and conduct of Wicliff, ſee Gilpin's Lives of the Reformers.

ledgement of guilt, were ſet at liberty. By the council of Vienne, A. D 1311, the order was aboliſhed. Of its vaſt poſſeſſions part was beſtowed on the knights of St. John: and the remainder, ſituated in various countries, was confiſcated for the uſe of princes and kings.

In the fifteenth century the church appeared to receive ſome extenſion by the nominal ſubjugation of all Spain to the Chriſtian faith. Ferdinand, having extinguiſhed the laſt of the Saracenic kingdoms by the conqueſt of Grenada, A.D. 1492; compelled, by perſecution, great numbers of Moors, as well as of Jews, to aſſume an outward profeſſion of the Goſpel. In that year too Columbus, by the diſcovery of America, opened a new hemiſphere to Chriſtianity. A dreadful calamity had, in the mean time, overwhelmed a large portion of the Chriſtian world. The Grecian empire, which for ſeveral ages had been ſhrinking into narrower and narrower limits before the face of the Turks, now ſhook Europe with

with its fall. Conſtantinople was taken A. D. 1453, by the ſultan Mahomet II. The Aſiatic provinces were already his: and the European dependencies of the capital followed its fate. Over the ſcenes of the miniſtry of Chriſt and of the labours of his apoſtles; over Paleſtine, and Syria, Aſia Minor, and Macedonia, and Achaia, and Attica, and the reſt of Greece, the creſcent of Mahomet now ſhone triumphant. Epheſus and Smyrna, and the ſurrounding cities, cheriſhed by the affectionate ſuperintendence of St. John; Corinth and Theſſalonica, and Philippi, and Coloſſe, and Galatia, inſtructed by the ardent zeal, and confirmed by the animating epiſtles of St. Paul; now alike beheld their churches demoliſhed or converted into moſques: and the conſcientious remnant which adhered to the Goſpel, precarioufly retaining the exerciſe of its religion, in corners, under tribute, infamy, and oppreſſion. At the cloſe of the eighteenth century Chriſtian Europe has ſtill the ſame awful ſcene to contemplate: and may read in the fate

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of theſe once highly favoured regions the judgements which await herſelf, unleſs, renouncing her corruptions, ſhe turns in purity of faith and practice to Him who "is no reſpecter of perſons."

Yet in ſome particulars the ruin of the Eaſtern empire contributed ultimately to the advantage of genuine Chriſtianity. The literature of the Greeks, however infected with their characteriſtic ſubtleties and other defects, was far ſuperior to that of the Weſt. Their learned men, flying from the Turkiſh power, carried with them into exile their knowledge, together with many of their books. Preſenting themſelves in Italy and the neighbouring kingdoms, where a taſte for learning had gradually taken root; pitied for their ſufferings, and patroniſed for their acquirements; and on many occaſions taking upon themſelves the office of inſtructors for the purpoſe of gaining a ſubſiſtence: they univerſally excited a thirſt for improvement, and a paſſion for inveſtigation, which extremely facilitated

tated in the next century the progreſs of the reformers. The general diffuſion and deſire of knowledge received about the ſame period the moſt ſignal aid and encouragement, by the diſcovery of the art of printing, invented about A. D. 1440, by Coſter of Haerlem, and ſpeedily improved by Guttemberg of Straſburg, and Schoeffer of Mentz (*b*).

In the Roman church the great ſchiſm continued. After an ineffectual attempt to cloſe it by the council of Piſa, which excommunicated and depoſed the two contending pontiffs, and elected a third; a general council was aſſembled, A. D. 1414, at Conſtance, through the exertions of Sigiſmund, emperor of Germany. By two of its decrees the Pope was declared inferior and ſubject to the aſſembled delegates of the univerſal church. The three competitors, after fruitleſs ſtruggles, reſigned or were depoſed; and Martin V. was raiſed to the papal throne. The zeal of the council was

(*b*) See the Tranſlator's note, Mo'heim, vol. iii. p. 392.

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at the ſame time directed with equal ardor to another object; the deſtruction of John Huſs. Huſs, a native of Prague, was appointed, A. D. 1408, rector of the univerſity in that city. He became acquainted with ſome of the writings of Wicliff; and did not conceal his admiration of them. The neighbouring clergy, to whoſe lives the piety of Huſs was a conſpicuous contraſt, complained to Rome: and Huſs, without being heard, was excommunicated. He daily received additional countenance and reſpect in Bohemia, and from perſons of the higheſt claſſes. At this period John XXIII. being at war with the king of Naples, diſpatched a legate to Prague, as to other places, to raiſe troops by granting indulgences. The ſpirited writings of Huſs ruined the levy. Accuſed of hereſy, he was required to attend the council of Conſtance; and received from Sigiſmund an Imperial ſafe-conduct, ſpecifically guaranteeing both his journey thither and his return. On his road through Germany he was welcomed from city to city with the

higheſt

higheſt reverence. When he arrived at Conſtance, he was thrown, after a trifling examination before the Pope and cardinals, into a dungeon and loaded with fetters. Unceaſing exertions were made by his enemies to obtain from Sigiſmund a retraction of his ſafe-conduct, and to procure from the council the condemnation of Huſs. Both attempts were ſucceſsful. Petitions ſigned in Bohemia by nearly all the nobles and gentlemen of the kingdom, claiming the faith of the Imperial promiſe, were preſented to the council and to the emperor in vain. Huſs, though he appears to have held ſeveral of the leading doctrines of the Romiſh Church; refuſing to acknowledge the ſupremacy of the Pope, and to admit in their full extent other Romiſh tenets, was condemned to the ſtake. Seven biſhops immediately advanced to perform the ceremony of his degradation from the prieſtly office antecedently to his execution. Each prelate, adding a curſe, took off a part of the ſacerdotal garments of their victim. The ſcene was cloſed by

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one of the biſhops; who placing a cap, painted with forms of fiends, on the head of Huſs, cried out; "Hereby we commit "thy ſoul to the devil." Huſs ſmiled, and anſwered, "It is leſs painful than a crown "of thorns." He was immediately burned; and his aſhes were ſcattered into the Rhine. His diſciple, Jerome of Prague, who, on hearing of his maſter's danger, haſtened to his comfort, was at firſt terrified at the proſpect of death, and recanted. But he was ſoon reſtored to Chriſtian fortitude, and encountered martyrdom with joy (*c*). The remains of Wicliff had already experienced the vengeance of the fathers of Conſtance. His bones, by their command, were dug up; and committed with his works to the flames. The council, having decreed that the laity ſhould no longer receive the cup at the holy ſacrament, and diſappointed all Europe by poſtponing that reformation of the church which it had

(*c*) For an account of the life, opinions, and death of Huſs, and of Jerome of Prague, conſult Gilpin's Lives of the Reformers.

originally

originally averred to be its principal purpoſe, was diſſolved, A. D. 1418.

Five years afterwards the encreaſing cry for reformation conſtrained the reluctant Martin V. to aſſemble a council at Pavia, which was ultimately removed to Baſil. Its boldneſs and zeal filled the ſucceeding pontiff, Eugenius IV. with alarm. To elude the danger, he aſſembled a rival council at Ferrara, and excommunicated its opponent; which deſpiſed his thunders, and elected another pontiff. During ten years this new ſchiſm divided the kingdoms of Europe. In the mean time Eugenius enjoyed the perſonal ſolicitations of the Greek patriarch and emperor, ſhuddering at the menaces of the Turks, for eccleſiaſtical amity and temporal protection. Rigorous conditions were preſcribed and accepted. The Greeks acknowledged that the Holy Ghoſt proceeded from the Son as well as from the Father: that purgatorial fire awaits the ſouls of the righteous; that unleavened bread may be uſed in the ſacrament:

ment: and that the Roman pontiff reigns ſupreme over the univerſal church. On their return to Conſtantinople they diſclaimed the treaty: and the ſchiſm is ſtill uncloſed at this day. Of the remaining pontiffs of this century two require briefly to be noticed. Æneas Sylvius, who had ſtrenuouſly ſupported at Baſil the pre-eminence of councils over Popes, becoming poſſeſſed of the papal throne, publiſhed, A. D. 1463, a complete recantation of his former declarations: and ſhameleſsly avowed that as Æneas Sylvius he was "a damn-"able heretic," but as Pius II. an orthodox pontiff. Alexander VI. whoſe name was Borgia, was one of thoſe monſters of guilt, which the world has rarely witneſſed. "His life and actions ſhew," ſays Moſheim, "that there was a Nero among the Popes "as well as among the emperors."

The more auſtere part of the Franciſcan ſect, known by the name of Minorites, again renounced the allegiance, and rouſed the fury of the pontiffs; who in vain em-

ployed impriſonment, exile, civil magiſtrates, armies, and inquiſitors to ſubdue their obſtinacy. The Flagellants, a ſect of fanatics, the Waldenſes, and other contemners of Rome, were alſo committed in numbers to the flames. In Bohemia the followers of Huſs took up arms for the maintainance of their religion, and the excluſion of the emperor Sigiſmund from the throne of that kingdom. Under their renowned leader, Ziſca, they defeated year after year, with immenſe ſlaughter, the Imperial armies. After the death of Ziſca they were ruined by internal diſſenſion. Divided into hoſtile parties, one of which granted, while the other denied, the ſacramental cup to the laity, they turned their arms againſt each other. Sigiſmund, recovering from deſpair, eaſily reduced the vanquiſhed and the victors. In England the diſciples of Wicliff multiplied ſo rapidly, that, in the language of the monkiſh writers, if you met two perſons upon the road, you might be certain that one of them was a Lollard: a term of reproach borrowed from

the Germans, among whom it was uſed to ſignify a ſinger of hymns. Their moſt eminent patron was Oldcaſtle Lord Cobham, a nobleman of extraordinary talents and undaunted piety; and high in the favor of Henry V. until the malevolent artifices of the Romiſh clergy alienated the regard of the king. Cobham, abandoned to the fury of the eccleſiaſtical order now elated by having recently obtained from the parliament a law for the deſtruction of heretics; and calumnioufly charged with a treaſonable conſpiracy, eſcaped from the Tower into Wales. After four years his retreat was diſcovered. He was dragged to St. Giles's Fields; ſuſpended in chains upon a gallows; and as a traitor and a heretic, burned alive (*d*).

The early part of the ſixteenth century witneſſed an event the moſt glorious that had occurred ſince the apoſtolic age, the

(*d*) See the Life of Lord Cobham, and alſo of Ziſca, by Mr. Gilpin.

reform-

reformation of corrupted Chriſtianity by the bleſſing of God on the exertions of Luther and his aſſociates. Luther, a man diſtinguiſhed for talents, ſcriptural knowledge, and piety, was profeſſor of divinity in the univerſity of Wittemberg in Saxony. Tetzel, an agent of Leo X. arrived there, A. D. 1517, with a commiſſion from the pontiff to grant plenary indulgences to every perſon, who ſhould contribute to the expence of building the Roman cathedral of St. Peter. Luther, ſcandaliſed at this venal remiſſion of all ſins, paſt, preſent, or to come (*e*), expoſed with vehement indignation the impious traffic from the pulpit and the preſs. His arguments and his boldneſs were equally admired throughout Germany. Leo, naturally fond of eaſe, and occupied in the purſuits of pleaſure and ambition, deſpiſed what he deemed a mere ſquabble among monks. He was rouſed by the tidings of Luther's rapid ſucceſs;

(*e*) See the form of the Indulgences at full length in Robertſon's Hiſtory of Charles V. 8vo. 1782, vol. ii. p. 107, note.

and by the clamours of the popiſh eccleſiaſtics for aid and for vengeance. The papal legate in Germany ſummoned Luther into his preſence, and commanded him to recant. Luther refuſed to retract antecedently to conviction. As yet he had no thoughts of queſtioning the ſupremacy of the Pope; nor any ſuſpicions of the radical corruptions of the Romiſh Church. But thoſe corruptions are ſo linked together, and ſo dependent one upon another; that the diſcovery of one naturally and almoſt neceſſarily draws after it the detection of more. Such was the progreſs in the mind of Luther. While attempts at accommodation were taking place in Germany, the pontiff, inſtigated by the impatient fury of thoſe around him, iſſued a bull, A. D. 1520. denouncing deſtruction againſt Luther as an excommunicated heretic, unleſs he ſhould recant within ſixty days. The reformer, firmly convinced that the Church of Rome is the idolatrous and antichriſtian church of the Apocalypſe, immediately and publickly relinquiſhed its communion.

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In the mean time he was encouraged by the ſucceſſes of a diſtant coadjutor. The ſale of indulgences at Zurich ſtirred up the ſpirit of Zuinglius, a man equal to Luther in zeal and intrepidity, and more ſpeedily convinced of the duty of renouncing the Romiſh Church. His efforts were ably ſeconded by other learned men: and the reformation eſtabliſhed itſelf rapidly in the greater part of Switzerland. In the following year Luther was required to appear before his avowed enemy, the emperor Charles V. in the diet at Worms. Unmoved by the apprehenſions of his friends, who reminded him of the fate of Huſs, he inſtantly obeyed: acknowledged that his writings had occaſionally been violent and acrimonious: but refuſed to retract his opinions, until they ſhould be proved erroneous by the Scriptures. An edict, pronouncing him an excommunicated criminal, and commanding the ſeizure of his perſon as ſoon as the duration of the ſafe-conduct which he had obtained ſhould have expired, was immediately promulgated. Frederic

the Wiſe, elector of Saxony, who had countenanced him without profeſſing his doctrines, now withdrew him from the ſtorm. As Luther was returning from Worms, a troop of horſemen in maſks ruſhed from a wood, ſeized him, and conveyed him to the caſtle of Wartburg; where he was concealed during nine months, encouraging his adherents by his pen, and cheered in return by accounts of the rapid diffuſion of his doctrines. John, the ſucceſſor of Frederic, took a deciſive ſtep; and eſtabliſhed the reformed religion, A. D. 1527, throughout his dominions, under the eye of Luther and of the mild and excellent, though ſometimes too timid, Melancthon. In a diet at Spires, held about the ſame time, the execution of the edict of Worms againſt the Lutherans, at preſent too formidable to be oppreſſed with impunity, was ſuſpended until the convocation of a general council to remedy the diſorders of the church. But in another diet held at the ſame place, A. D. 1529, the ſuſpenſion was revoked by a decree obtained through

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the influence of Charles, who now found himſelf at leiſure to puſh forward his views againſt the ſupporters of the reformation. Againſt this new decree the electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, the landgrave of Heſſe, ſeveral other princes, and thirteen Imperial cities and towns, ſolemnly proteſted. Hence the appellation of Proteſtants became common to all, who embraced the reformed religion. At the diet of Augſburg in the following year, a clear ſtatement of the reformed faith drawn up by Luther and Melanchon, was preſented on behalf of the Proteſtant members of the empire. It obtained the name of the confeſſion of Augſburg. By this time Sweden had completely adopted the reformed tenets: which had likewiſe obtained perfect toleration in Denmark, where they were adopted ſome years afterwards as the doctrines of the national church. They were alſo daily gaining converts in other kingdoms of Europe.

The proteſtant princes of Germany, continually receiving freſh tokens of the hoſtile deſigns of the emperor, united at Smalcald, A. D. 1530, in a confederacy for the mutual defence of their religion. Charles, whoſe meaſures were not yet mature, temporiſed. In the beginning of the year 1546 Luther died. At that time alſo, the procraſtinating evaſions of the pope being exhauſted, the long expected general council aſſembled at Trent. The proteſtants, however, refuſed to attend or obey a council convoked in the name and by the authority of the pope, and governed by his legates. Charles aſſembled troops on all ſides; and concluded a treaty with the pope for the deſtruction of the reformed religion and its adherents. The proteſtants could no longer be amuſed, and took the field. Charles was completely ſucceſsful. The elector of Saxony was deprived of his dominions, which were given to his nephew Maurice, whoſe perfidy had ruined the proteſtant cauſe; and was treated with cruelty and inſult, and detained priſoner. The landgrave of Heſſe threw himſelf

ſelf on the mercy of the emperor. Charles, ſhamefully violating the treaty concluded between them, kept him alſo in confinement; where his indignant fretfulneſs, ſucceeded by offers of unqualified ſubmiſſion to the Imperial will, was ſtrongly contraſted by the pious reſignation and firmneſs of the depoſed elector. The emperor now proceeded to complete his triumph. A rule of faith, denominated the Interim, becauſe it was intended to remain in force only until a general council ſhould terminate the diſputes concerning religion; and containing under a ſpecious form all the eſſential doctrines of the church of Rome; was promulgated by the emperor's command, and enforced by his arms nearly throughout Germany. His career was at length ſtopped by an unſuſpected foe. Maurice of Saxony, ſtung by the univerſal reproaches of the proteſtants; enraged at the Imperial breach of faith towards the landgrave of Heſſe, his father-in-law; and convinced that Charles was meditating nothing leſs than the entire ſubjugation of the

the civil and religious liberties of Germany; took his meaſures with the inſidiouſneſs belonging to his character, and ſuddenly appeared in arms with a force, which Charles was wholly unprepared to reſiſt. The conſequences were "The Religious Peace," eſtabliſhed A. D. 1555, by the diet at Augſburg; and the complete ſecurity of religious freedom to the proteſtant ſtates.

During the courſe of theſe events the reformed opinions were extending their influence in various other countries. They acquired many friends, even in Italy. They privately diffuſed themſelves in Spain, notwithſtanding the crowded dungeons and buſy flames of the inquiſition. In France they had ſtill more ample ſucceſs. At Geneva they were firmly eſtabliſhed by Calvin. But their principal triumph was in Great Britain. When Luther firſt declared war againſt the pope, Henry VIII. proud of his theological might, ruſhed into the battle. His Treatiſe on the Seven Sacraments was repaid by the enraptured pontiff with

with praiſe little inferior to that of inſpiration: and with the title of Defender of the Faith, which in a ſenſe diametrically oppoſite, and by a claim of higher deſert, belongs in modern times to his ſucceſſors. But Henry was faithful in allegiance only to his paſſions. In proceſs of time he felt ſcruples, increaſed by his growing attachment to Anne Boleyn, as to the lawfulneſs of his long-eſtabliſhed marriage with Catherine, who had originally been contracted to his brother; and ſolicited the pope for a divorce. The pope, balancing the diſpleaſure of Henry againſt the indignation of the emperor Charles, the nephew of the queen, procraſtinated a deciſion. After bearing the papal delays during ſix years, Henry loſt all patience. The opinions of univerſities, learned men, and rabbis, in various parts of Europe, collected by the advice of Cranmer, now archbiſhop of Canterbury, had declared the marriage unlawful: and the ſentence of divorce was pronounced by that prelate. The pope threatened excommunication. Henry replied

plied by an appeal to a general council. The appeal was notified to the pope, then at Marſeilles, by Bonner, of ſanguinary memory, with his characteriſtic violence. The pontiff, not leſs outrageous, talked of throwing the audacious meſſenger into a cauldron of melted lead: and Bonner returned precipitately to England. By the interpoſition of Francis I. the French king, hopes of a favourable ſentence, on ſubmiſſion within a limited time, were held forth to Henry from the pope: and Bellay, biſhop of Bayonne, was diſpatched by Francis to ſooth Henry into compliance. Bellay ſucceeded. The pope, with difficulty, reſtrained himſelf until the appointed day. It arrived without tidings from Henry: and the pontiff eagerly annulled the divorce. Two days afterwards the meſſenger, who had been retarded by adverſe winds, appeared with the ſubmiſſion. But the decrees of infallibility were irrevocable. Henry heard the news, and aſſembled his parliament. The papal ſupremacy was renounced; and the king declared head of

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the church. Henry ſoon caſt his eye on the wealth of the monaſteries. A rigorous inquiry into their internal ſtate was inſtituted. Scandalous enormities were diſcovered: all the religious houſes were terrified or compelled into a ſurrender of themſelves and their poſſeſſions to the king: and the parliament ſanctioned their downfall. Henry, however, was no proteſtant. Power he loved, and plunder: but in doctrines, avowedly continued attached to the faith which he had defended. All the changes in the public worſhip which were introduced during his reign were effected by the piety and conciliating influence of Cranmer, almoſt againſt the wiſhes of a perſecuting tyrant, who would ſcarcely ſuffer any one to think differently from him on any ſubject, yet preſerved towards the prelate a warm and uniform regard. The archbiſhop was obliged to proceed gradually, and with caution: and was repeatedly driven back from points which he had gained. He began by reforming the abuſes of his own eccleſiaſtical courts; by diminiſh-

diminiſhing the number of holidays; and by attempting to improve the wretched ſtate of public preaching, and to leſſen the credit of various parts of the popular ſuperſtition. He directed, with the authority of the convocation, that the creed, the ten commandments, and the Lord's prayer, ſhould be taught in Engliſh; and prevailed on Henry to allow the uſe of ſome other prayers in the vulgar tongue. But his great work was the printing of an Engliſh Bible founded on the verſion of Wicliff, now become obſolete, and that of Tindal, which had recently been publiſhed abroad. The tranſlation was licenſed by the king; and fixed to a deſk in the churches. The ardour with which it was received was extreme. The churches were filled with crowds to read or to hear it: and many perſons learned to read in their old age, that they might at length peruſe the word of God. The catholics beſieged Henry and the parliament for the ſuppreſſion of the book: but could not entirely ſucceed. On the death of Henry the reformation

began to advance in earneſt during the ſhort reign of his ſucceſſor. But when Mary aſcended the throne all was reverſed. Latimer, and Ridley, and Hooper, and Ferrar, and Rogers, and other eminent proteſtants, with numbers of their followers ſealed their faith with their blood. Switzerland and the Low Countries were filled with Engliſh exiles, who fled for their lives. Cranmer, like St. Peter, fell in the hour of trial: and like St. Peter, "wept bitterly," and repented. At the ſtake, as the ſmoke was removed by the wind, he was ſeen ſtretching forth his right hand, with which he had ſigned a recantation, into the midſt of the flames; and was heard exclaiming, "That hand offended; that unworthy "hand!" The acceſſion of Elizabeth diſpelled the ſtorm: and the reformed religion was immediately eſtabliſhed throughout her dominions. In the courſe of theſe changes Ireland followed the ſteps of the ſiſter kingdom (*f*). Two years afterwards,

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(*f*) The ſhedding of blood in Ireland, under queen Mary, was providentially prevented by the following ſingular,

A. D. 1559, John Knox introduced the reformation from Geneva into Scotland; where it rapidly prevailed over all oppoſition, and was eſtabliſhed according to the Calviniſtic model. One of its principal ſupporters was the earl of Caſſilis. That nobleman, having been taken priſoner by the Engliſh, A. D. 1542, at the battle of Solway Moſs, was conveyed to London, and committed by Henry to the care of Cranmer; from whom he imbibed the principles of proteſtantiſm. England alſo rendered very important and timely aſſiſt-

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ſingular, yet authentic, incident. Mary diſpatched Dr. Cole thither, with a commiſſion for the deſtruction of Proteſtantiſm. At Cheſter, Cole, diſcourſing with the mayor, pointed to a box, and ſaid; "Here is a commiſ-"ſion that ſhall laſh the heretics of Ireland." The miſtreſs of the houſe, who was a proteſtant, and had a proteſtant brother in Dublin, heard the expreſſion; and in the abſence of the Doctor, took away the commiſſion, and ſubſtituted a pack of cards, with the knave of clubs uppermoſt. Cole purſued his journey; and made the diſcovery in the privy council chamber at Dublin. He returned in confuſion to England for a new commiſſion; and on his way to Ireland with it, was ſtopped by tidings of the queen's death. See Moſheim, vol. iv. p. 128, the Tranſlator's Note.

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ance to the proteſtant cauſe in the Low Countries. Thoſe provinces then belonged to Spain. The relentleſs cruelty of Philip, aiming to root out the reformed religion by the inquiſition and the ſword, found a worthy agent in the bloodthirſty duke of Alva. The Proteſtants, at length, took up arms in defence of their lives and liberties under William, Prince of Orange. In the courſe of a long and moſt eventful war the ſuccours of Elizabeth were among their moſt powerful encouragements. Upon the death of William, on whoſe head Philip had ſet a price, by the piſtol of an aſſaſſin, A.D. 1584; his place was ſupplied by his ſon Maurice. At the cloſe of the conteſt, A. D. 1609, the ſeven maritime or Dutch provinces were eſtabliſhed in civil and religious liberty. In the mean time the Proteſtants in France had been compelled to defend themſelves by force of arms. The civil war was attended with various ſucceſs. At laſt the French court, deſpairing of conqueſt, had recourſe to perhaps the blackeſt treachery that ſtains the annals of mankind. By a

feigned accommodation, and by the moſt inſidious teſtimonies of favor, Charles IX. king of France enſnared the Proteſtant leaders to Paris. On the eve of the feſtival of St. Bartholomew, A. D. 1572, they were there maſſacred, with above five hundred men of rank, and nearly ten thouſand perſons of inferior condition. Orders were diſpatched to all the provinces for a ſimilar execution: and Rouen, Lyons, and many other cities emulated the horrors of the capital. The ſurvivors flew to arms. Five years afterwards the famous Catholic league was formed againſt the proteſtants, who, under Henry king of Navarre, withſtood its fierceſt efforts. Henry was aſſiſted with large ſums of money by Elizabeth. He ſucceeded, A. D. 1589, to the throne of France; and four years afterwards, ſacrificing conſcience to policy, renounced the proteſtant faith. In A. D. 1598, however, he granted to the proteſtants, by the edict of Nantes, the ſecure enjoyment of their religion and of their civil rights.

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The active ſpirit of enquiry, natural to men who had juſt broken looſe from the deſpotiſm of popery, operating differently on different intellects and diſpoſitions, almoſt neceſſarily produced a variety of ſects; and in ſome caſes extreme wildneſs and extravagance of unſcriptural doctrine and practice. One great ſource of contention reſpected ceremonies and church-government. Some proteſtant churches, regarding with abhorrence whatever had been an appendage of the Romiſh religion, renounced, together with ancient rites, the primeval inſtitution of epiſcopacy. Others were of opinion that it was more wiſe to preſerve whatever was in itſelf innocent, and to be content with the removal of corruptions. Points of doctrine too cauſed diviſions. And the controverſies among the reformers, ſome of whom long retained a portion of the virulent ſpirit of popery, were too often conducted, even when they related to matters of ſecondary importance, with the violence and acrimony by which, in oppoſing the Roman catholics, a good cauſe had been

diſgraced (*g*). Among the fanatical ſects of this age, the turbulent German anabap-

(*g*) Many of the writings of Luther himſelf abound in the ſcurrilous invective almoſt univerſal in the age in which he lived. The perſecuting ſpirit of popery infected many proteſtants. The death of Servetus is an indelible ſtain on the memory of Calvin. Even the mild Cranmer perſuaded the reluctance of Edward VI. to conſent to two executions at the ſtake. Some of the doctrines of popery adhered long to particular minds. Cranmer believed in tranſubſtantiation until within ſome few years of his death. And Luther, though he relinquiſhed that tenet, embraced and retained the kindred and equally unſcriptural and abſurd doctrine of conſubſtantiation.

The ſpirit of our own church from the reformation to the preſent time is briefly deſcribed with juſtice and candour by Biſhop Porteus.—"Although, after it had ſhaken off the galling yoke of popery, it could not of a ſudden diveſt itſelf of all its ancient hereditary prejudices: although it was a conſiderable length of time before it could fancy itſelf ſecure againſt the proteſtant ſeparatiſts without that body-guard of pains and penalties, with which it had been accuſtomed to ſee itſelf as well as every church in Europe ſurrounded: yet even in the plenitude of authority, and when its ideas and exerciſe of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline were at the higheſt, it ſtands chargeable with fewer acts of extravagant ſeverity than any other eſtabliſhed church, of the ſame magnitude and power, in the Chriſtian world. By degrees, however, as it improved in knowledge, it improved in mildneſs too. The laſt century ſaw the beginning, and the preſent times have ſeen the farther extenſion, of a moſt noble ſyſtem of religious liberty, which has placed legal toleration on its true baſis: a meaſure no leſs conſonant to ſound policy than to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity." Sermons, edit. 3d, vol. i. p. 292.

tiſts,

tiſts, or Mennonites, ſtand pre-eminent. Among the ſects remarkable only for receding the moſt in doctrine both from the catholics and the maſs of proteſtants, the Socinians, who derive their name from two teachers, an uncle and a nephew of the name of Socinus, are conſpicuous. They denied the divinity of Chriſt and of the Holy Ghoſt, and other leading doctrines of Chriſtianity. Their principal ſettlements were in Poland, whence they ſpread into Hungary and Tranſilvania. In mentioning the new religious communities of the ſixteenth century a Romiſh order, that of the Jeſuits, muſt not be forgotten. It was founded by Ignatius Loyola. Implicit obedience to the orders of the pope was a fundamental part of their inſtitution. By their artful policy, their cloſe union, their regular internal ſubordination, their unremitting attention to the affairs of the world, and their accommodating and infamous maxims of morality which prepared them for every indulgence and every compliance; they ſpeedily became univerſally powerful,

and ruled, at different periods the meaſures of the principal courts of Europe (*b*).

In the ſeventeenth century, though ſome of the Roman pontiffs rivalled in their pretenſions the moſt ambitious of their predeceſſors, the papal authority in countries of the Romiſh communion was impaired by a diſtinction which princes began to eſtabliſh between the church of Rome and the court of Rome; and by the denial of the pope's right of interference in the civil concerns of other ſovereigns. Some exertions even of his ſpiritual power were boldly and ſucceſsfully oppoſed by the Venetians, and by Louis XIV. The pontiffs appeared ſolicitous to balance their European loſſes by acquiſitions in other quarters of the globe. Their miſſionaries were numerous and indefatigable. Among theſe the Jeſuits took the lead. In China, India, Japan,

(*b*) In ſpeaking of popes, Jeſuits, and other claſſes of men, the brevity of this hiſtorical review ſometimes obliges me to notice them collectively, and in general terms. The reader will remember that there have been among them many individuals, however deluded, of ſincere piety.

and Abyſſinia, great multitudes became converts. Chriſtianity, however, in the two latter countries was ſuppreſſed by political ſuſpicion. From Abyſſinia the miſſionaries were irrevocably excluded, A.D. 1634. About the ſame period a perſecution, more barbarous than any which is recorded in hiſtory, exterminated the Chriſtian faith in Japan. The modes of converſion employed by the Jeſuits were loudly condemned by their hoſtile aſſociates the Dominicans and the Franciſcans: and ſometimes extorted marks of reluctant diſapprobation from the pontiffs. The fact is, that the Jeſuits proceeded in religion, as in other points, on the unchriſtian principle, that the end ſanctifies the means. They modelled Chriſtianity to the taſte of their converts; and permitted them to retain, under a thin diſguiſe, their favourite and even idolatrous cuſtoms. They ſcrupled no deceit to effect their object. Robert de Nobili, who conducted the celebrated Indian miſſion of Madura, diſfiguring himſelf into the likeneſs of a Bramin, announced

himſelf to the natives as ſuch from a diſtant country; produced a parchment writing, forged by himſelf in the ancient Indian character, which ſtated that the Bramins of Rome were older than thoſe of India, and that the Jeſuits were deſcended in a direct line from the god Bramah: and (as Jouvenci, a Jeſuit, teſtifies in the hiſtory of his order) when queſtioned in an aſſembly of Bramins concerning the authenticity of the parchment, confirmed it upon oath. He gained immenſe numbers of proſelytes. His ſucceſſors continued the artifice; and boldly denied themſelves to be Europeans. During this century popery extended itſelf in America: while new colonies were at the ſame time founded in that continent by proteſtant ſettlers of various perſuaſions.

In the mean time violence and treachery were let looſe againſt the proteſtants of Europe. In Auſtria and Bohemia the treaties which ſecured religious liberty were deſpiſed by the catholics, and every oppreſſion

preſſion was practiſed. The Auſtrian proteſtants yielded to violence: the Bohemians took up arms, and choſe, A D. 1619, the elector Palatine for their king. His defeat in the following year brought ruin on himſelf and his cauſe. The victorious emperor now hoped to ſubjugate Germany to Rome and himſelf. By the edict of reſtitution, iſſued A. D. 1629, he commanded the proteſtants to reſtore to the church of Rome all the poſſeſſions which they had acquired from it in the preceding century by the peace of religion. Guſtavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, checked his career. After thirty years of war, the reſtitution-edict was abrogated, and the peace of religion renewed, A. D. 1648, by the treaty of Weſtphalia. But religious liberty was not reſtored to the Auſtrian and Bohemian proteſtants; nor the whole of the Palatinate to its antient ſovereign. From A. D. 1671 to A. D. 1681, the proteſtants of Hungary were cruelly oppreſſed. Some years before, the Socinians had been condemned to capital puniſhment in Poland; and all the

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ſect was driven in miſery out of the country. And during the whole century the reſt of the Poliſh proteſtants found that no treaty was regarded by the Catholics. The remains of the Waldenſes in Piedmont were repeatedly perſecuted with fire and ſword by the dukes of Savoy. In England, an attempt was made, A. D. 1604, under the direction of Garnet, ſuperior of the Engliſh Jeſuits, to deſtroy the king and the parliament by gunpowder. The proteſtants of France, after ſuſtaining many ſucceſſive injuries, together with the loſs, A. D. 1628, of their chief city Rochelle, which they had been authoriſed to fortify, were attacked in proceſs of time by local and moſt ſavage perſecution. The revocation of the edict of Nantes, by Louis XIV. A. D. 1685, crowned his guilt and their miſeries. More than half a million ſought refuge in other countries from the rage of an unrelenting ſoldiery: and nearly fifty thouſand found an aſylum in England. The faith of the reformed churches was likewiſe aſſailed by Romiſh writers, who publiſhed

liſhed inſinuating and deluſive explanations of the tenets of popery. Among theſe authors the moſt eminent was Boſſuet, biſhop of Meaux; whoſe expoſition, though now in high reputation among the catholics, was at firſt ſtrongly cenſured by individuals and univerſities of that perſuaſion, and was diſapproved and applauded by ſucceſſive Popes. Some proteſtant authors were enſnared by a deſire of Chriſtian union into an improper approach to antichriſtian doctrines. Chriſtina, queen of Sweden, and ſeveral German princes embraced in this century the Romiſh communion; but without effect as to the national religion of their ſubjects (*i*).

(*i*) In Spain the ſpirit of popery, to which many Chriſtians were ſacrificed by the inquiſition, fell with extreme fury on the Moreſcoes, the deſcendants of the Saracens. Theſe unhappy people, after experiencing the utmoſt perfidy and cruelty from Ferdinand, Charles V. and his ſucceſſors, were now ſuddenly expelled, A. D. 1609, from Spain by Philip III. in the moſt barbarous manner; and ſet on ſhore, deſtitute of protection, on the coaſt of Africa, where more than a hundred thouſand of them periſhed. See their whole Hiſtory in Watſon's Life of Philip III. Book 4th.

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In the reign of Elizabeth, many of the Engliſh, who had fled to Geneva during the perſecution under Mary, returned to England with ſtrong prepoſſeſſions in favour of Calviniſtic doctrines and forms; and being diſſatisfied with the eſtabliſhed church, becauſe, in their opinion, it was not formed after a pure model, produced a ſect of non-conformiſts denominated Puritans. They were reſtleſs; the age was intolerant; the queen hoſtile and deſpotic in the uſe of prerogative: in conſequence they were treated with harſhneſs and injuſtice. From James, though the arrogant violence of the Scottiſh clergy of the day had rendered him a warm friend to epiſcopacy, they experienced greater humanity. In the reign of Charles I. they met with oppoſition and vexation from Laud, archbiſhop of Canterbury, who regarded them with horror. But their party gradually derived ſtrength from the political meaſures of the king: and had a leading ſhare in precipitating the kingdom into civil war. In the courſe of the conflict they

they were depreſſed and ſupplanted by the more recent ſect of Independents; who diſclaimed every form of union between churches, and aſſigned to each congregation the excluſive government of itſelf. Both puritans and independents haraſſed in every poſſible way the national church; and ultimately ſucceeded in aboliſhing epiſcopacy, and ejecting the epiſcopal clergy. Under Cromwell, who was alike averſe to epiſcopacy and preſbyterianiſm, the church of England was delivered to the management of a ſet of commiſſioners. It reſumed, with the reſtoration of Charles II. its ancient form; and upwards of two thouſand of the preſbyterian clergy relinquiſhed their cures in one day. In Scotland alſo, where Charles I. inſtigated by Laud, had attempted with equal impropriety and ill ſucceſs to eſtabliſh epiſcopacy by force, the church was now placed under the government of biſhops. Charles II. whoſe profligacy would have diſgraced any religion, was ſecretly a favourer or a convert of the catholics. His ſucceſſor

was an avowed papiſt; and by the moſt flagrant attacks on the religious and civil liberties of Great Britain, laboured to accompliſh the re-eſtabliſhment of popery. The revolution, A. D. 1688, delivered the nation from the dread of arbitrary power and idolatrous ſuperſtition; and ſettled political and eccleſiaſtical freedom on ſo firm a baſe, that under the bleſſing of God they have remained ſtedfaſt unto this day. May this bleſſing long preſerve them! The national church of Scotland was again reſtored to preſbyterian government, ſo acceptable to that part of the iſland. But the epiſcopalian congregations ſtill continue to be governed by a regular ſucceſſion of biſhops.

The catholic and the proteſtant churches were alike agitated in this century with internal controverſies and diſſenſions. In the Romiſh communion the Dominicans and the Jeſuits were engaged in furious diſputes concerning the neceſſity and the nature of divine grace; and beſieged the papal chair for a deciſion. But death or

policy

policy repeatedly prevented the pontiffs from committing themſelves. Each party was thus at liberty to boaſt with equal loudneſs of poſſeſſing the ſecret approbation of popes. Soon afterwards the flame was rekindled by the popularity of a poſthumous work of Janſenius, biſhop of Ypres, favorable to the tenets of the Dominicans. Sophiſtry and invectives were arms common to both parties. To papal bulls, royal edicts, and troops of ſoldiers, which arranged themſelves on the ſide of the Jeſuits, the Janſeniſts oppoſed ſubtle diſtinctions, popular applauſe, and the fraudulent aid of pretended miracles. Among the proteſtants the new ſect of Quakers aroſe in England. But the principal conteſts which troubled the peace of the reformed churches, were thoſe which broke out between the Calviniſts and the followers of Arminius of Leyden. After ſeveral conferences between the contending parties in Holland, the Arminians ſaw their tenets condemned, A. D. 1618, in a ſynod held at Dort, their civil rights ſuppreſſed,

preſſed, their miniſters ſilenced, and the diſobedient congregations puniſhed by fine, impriſonment, and exile. Some years afterwards they were recalled. But it is to be obſerved, that their theological ſyſtem ſoon underwent a conſiderable change; and embraced many perſons whoſe opinions reſpecting the neceſſity of the aid of divine grace and other fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity appear to have fallen far below the ſtandard of the Goſpel. It is the more neceſſary to attend to this circumſtance, becauſe the term Arminian is not uncommonly applied as deſcriptive of the church of England. As far as it indicates the rejection of the Calviniſtic doctrines of predeſtination and reprobation by moſt of the members of that church, it is applied with juſtice; but it muſt not be uſed with a wider meaning.

Early in the eighteenth century, the Ruſſian church, which is of the Greek communion, underwent a material alteration as to external form, by the ſuppreſſion of the office of Patriarch, under Peter the Great;

Great; who thus became like the Engliſh monarch, head of the national church. He alſo aboliſhed penal laws againſt Chriſtians of other perſuaſions; and exerted himſelf to check ſuperſtition, and to enlighten the inconceivable ignorance of the clergy. But the radical depravation of Chriſtianity by the groſſeſt idolatry towards ſaints and pictures of ſaints ſtill overſpreads, amidſt other inferior corruptions, the Ruſſian empire. The Roman pontiffs in this age have been on the whole conſiderably ſuperior in piety and learning to moſt of their predeceſſors. The inteſtine diviſions in that church have continued. The breach between the Dominicans and the Jeſuits remained uncloſed: and the latter party obtained a ſignal triumph over the Janſeniſts, by procuring the papal condemnation, A. D. 1713, by the bull denominated Unigenitus, from the word with which it commences, of an hundred and one propoſitions, extracted from the annotations of Quenel, a celebrated Janſeniſt, on the New Teſtament.

Cardinal de Noailles, however, archbiſhop of Paris, ſupported by numbers of his clergy zealous for the liberties of the Gallican church, ſteadily refuſed, in defiance of the indignation of the pontiff and of Louis XIV. to recognize the authority of the bull. The kingdom was divided into two parties. By the aid of penal inflictions and the violence of Louis, the Jeſuits at length prevailed. But the downfall of the victors was at hand. A conſpiracy for the aſſaſſination of the king of Portugal, A.D. 1758, under the guidance of ſome principal Jeſuits, occaſioned the expulſion of the whole order from that kingdom. The odium purſued them throughout Europe. In 1761 ſome fraudulent mercantile tranſactions, in which the Jeſuits had been engaged, drew the attention in France of the civil power. In the following year the pernicious tendency of their writings furniſhed new charges. Their diſcuſſions at length dragged to light the hitherto concealed inſtitute or rules of their order, replete with maxims ſubverſive of ſocial peace

peace and of morality. Their colleges were ſeized; their effects were confiſcated; the order was extinguiſhed in France, and all its members were baniſhed. In the Spaniſh empire, within which they had eſtabliſhed in Paraguay an independent empire of their own, a ſimilar fate overwhelmed them. And, finally, the ſuppreſſion of the whole order was obtained, A. D. 1773, from the pontiff Clement XIV.

A ſtorm was in the mean time gathering againſt Chriſtianity itſelf. In England there had ariſen a ſucceſſion of ſceptical or deiſtical writers, who had in various ways carried on, with little apparent concert, their attacks againſt the religion of Chriſt. Some aſſailed the outworks, ſome the ſtrong holds; ſome proceeded openly; more, covertly and in diſguiſe. If, on the one hand, they had in many inſtances weakened or ſubverted the faith of the ignorant, the unſuſpecting, or the vicious; they had called forth, on the other, ſuch exertions of piety and learning in the friends and for the vindication of Chriſtianity, as

in effect to have benefited the cauſe which they were ſolicitous to injure. Their publications ſpeedily croſſed the channel; and found on the continent, particularly in France, hands ready to ſharpen and to brandiſh every weapon with which they ſhould be furniſhed. It now appears from an accumulation of unqueſtionable documents, and more eſpecially from the acknowledged works and correſpondence of Frederic king of Pruſſia; that Frederic, to whom the title of Great will henceforth be only a deeper brand of infamy; that the foreign enemies of the Goſpel, far from limiting their efforts to deſultory and unconnected attacks, have during many years been united in one firm, widely-extended, and regularly-organiſed confederation, for the expreſs purpoſe of exterminating by fraud and by force the name of Chriſtianity from the earth. In the doctrinal corruption, and the degrading ſuperſtition, by which the religion of Chriſt was diſfigured and polluted in the

countries

countries where their principal machinations were purſued; and in the political circumſtances of that kingdom, where the meditated exploſion took place; they found advantages almoſt beyond the power of computation. Of the events which have recently paſſed, and are ſtill paſſing before our eyes, the termination and the conſequences are yet in the boſom of Providence. Judging from the preſent appearances of worldly affairs, and, I think we may humbly add, from the word of prophecy; there ſeems little reaſon to believe that even that corrupt form of Chriſtianity, on which the blow has fallen, will prove to have received either a mortal or a permanent wound; a wound ſufficient to prevent it from exerciſing at a future period, by a final trial, of ſhort and limited duration, but of unparalleled ſeverity, the faith and conſtancy of the univerſal proteſtant church. But with reſpect to genuine Chriſtianity, that religion "againſt which "the gates of hell ſhall not prevail (*k*),"

(*k*) Matt. xvi. 18.

we know that every effort of human guile and human malice is but an additional link in that chain of events, by which the enemies of God are unconſciouſly forwarding his purpoſes: an additional ſtep in that determined progreſſion, by which, amidſt the ſhock of nations and the convulſion of empires, "the kingdoms of this "world ſhall become the kingdoms of "our Lord and of his Chriſt; and He ſhall "reign for ever and ever (*l*)."

Throughout the courſe of this century, and even to the preſent moment of its awful cloſe, the church of theſe kingdoms has been bleſſed with ſecurity and peace. Of the other claſſes and ſects of Chriſtians in this country, ſome, as the methodiſts, generally profeſs to remain united to the national eſtabliſhment: ſome, as the Anabaptiſts, diſſent from it only in few points of doctrine or diſcipline: ſome, as thoſe who without reaſon aſcribe excluſively to themſelves the title of Unitarians, recede in moſt

(*l*) Rev. xi. 15.

fundamental

fundamental points to the utmoſt extreme of ſeparation. Concerning the diſtinguiſhing tenets of theſe and other ſects it becomes me to be ſilent. The number and the ſubdiviſions of the ſects in queſtion, and the duty of deſcribing, if at all, with fulneſs and preciſion, opinions differing from my own, would neceſſarily lead to an extent of detail inconſiſtent with the brevity of my general plan. Thoſe opinions may eaſily be learned from the diſcourſes or the writings of the individuals who hold them. Yet I would not willingly diſmiſs the ſubject without preſſing the importance of warm and habitual regard to two momentous and moſt conſiſtent branches of Chriſtian duty: the obligation, on the one hand, of "earneſtly contending for the "faith, which was once delivered to the "ſaints (*m*);" and on the other, of "putting on charity, which is the bond of "perfectneſs (*n*)," and of habitually evinc-

(*m*) Jude, 3. (*n*) Col. iii. 14.

ing the ſpirit of the apoſtolic prayer; "grace be with all thoſe," all of every deſcription, "who love our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt in ſincerity (o)."

(o) Eph. vi. 24.

CHAP. XII.

ON FORMS OF CHURCH-GOVERNMENT AND ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

It is an apoſtolical direction, that a Chriſtian ſhould always be prepared to give "a reaſon of the hope that is in "him." The ground of the injunction extends to all inſtitutions cloſely connected with his faith. My preſent purpoſe therefore, is to aſſiſt the judgement of the younger part of my readers, by endeavouring briefly to ſatisfy them, that reaſons, ſubſtantial reaſons, may be advanced in ſupport of the eccleſiaſtical inſtitutions of their own country.

In every community or body of men, civil or eccleſiaſtical, ſome ſpecies of government is requiſite for the good of the whole.

whole. Otherwiſe, all is irregularity, confuſion, and interminable contention. How then, in any particular country, is the Chriſtian church to be governed? "Every "ſeparate congregation," anſwers the independent, "is a ſovereign church; amen-"able to no extrinſic juriſdiction, and en-"titled to no juriſdiction over other "churches."—"That mode of govern-"ment," replies the preſbyterian, "is cal-"culated to deſtroy unity, coöperation, "and concord among Chriſtians. All con-"gregations within the ſame ſtate, which "agree in doctrine, ought to be under the "general ſuperintendence of a repreſenta-"tive aſſembly, compoſed of their mini-"ſters and delegates."—"Such a repreſen-"tative aſſembly," returns the epiſcopalian, "wants vigour and diſpatch; and is "perpetually open to tumult, partiality, "and faction. Divide the country into "dioceſes; and ſtation a biſhop in each, "armed with ſufficient authority, and re-"ſtrained by adequate laws from abuſing "it. Such was the apoſtolical govern-

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" ment of the church: ſuch," perhaps he adds, " was the government enjoined on " ſucceeding ages."—" Away!" cries the papiſt, " with theſe treaſonable diſcuſſions. " The Pope, the ſucceſſor of St. Peter, is, by " divine right, the only ſource of eccleſi- " aſtical power; the univerſal monarch of " the univerſal church."

Writing as I am, to proteſtants, I may paſs by the claim of the ſucceſſor of St. Peter. But the concluding words of the epiſcopalian are of prime importance. If Chriſt, or his apoſtles, enjoined the uniform adoption of epiſcopacy; the queſtion is decided. Did Chriſt then or his apoſtles deliver or indirectly convey ſuch an injunction? This topic has been greatly controverted. The fact appears to be this: that our Saviour did not pronounce upon the ſubject; that the apoſtles uniformly eſtabliſhed a biſhop in every diſtrict, as ſoon as the church in that diſtrict became numerous; and thus clearly evinced their judgement as to the form of eccleſiaſtical govern-

government moſt advantageous, at leaſt in thoſe days, to Chriſtianity: but that they left no command, which rendered epiſcopacy univerſally indiſpenſable in future times, if other forms ſhould evidently promiſe, through local opinions and circumſtances, greater benefit to religion. Such is the general ſentiment of the preſent church of England on the ſubject (*a*).

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(*a*) I have pleaſure in quoting on this point the words of two eminent prelates and defenders of the church of England, one at the beginning, the other at the end, of the preſent century. "Eccleſias Reformatas, etſi in aliquibus a noſtrâ Anglicanâ diſſentientes, "libenter amplector. Optarem equidem regimen epiſcopale benè temperatum, et ab omni injuſtâ domination ſejunctum, quale apud nos obtinet, (et ſi "quid ego in his rebus ſapiam, ab ipſo apoſtolorum ævo "in eccleſiâ receptum fuerit,) et ab iis omnibus fuiſſet "retentum: nec deſpero quin aliquando reſtitutum, ſi "non ipſe videam, at poſteri videbunt. Interim abſit ut "ego tam ferrei pectoris ſim, ut ob ejuſmodi defectum "(ſic mihi abſque omni invidiâ appellare liceat) aliquas "earum à communione noſtrâ abſcindendas credam; aut, "cum quibuſdam furioſis inter nos ſcriptoribus, eas nulla "vera ac valida ſacramenta habere, adeòque vix Chriſtianos eſſe, pronuntiem." Letter from Wake, archbiſhop of Canterbury, to Mr. Le Clerc, publiſhed in the appendix to Maclaine's Tranſlation of Moſheim, 8vo.

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That the two orders of prieſts and deacons, into which, ſubordinately to biſhops, the

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vol. vi. p. 124. " We may ſafely challenge the enemies " of epiſcopacy to produce evidence of the exiſtence of " a ſingle antient independent church, which was not " governed by a biſhop: I mean, after it was fairly eſ- " tabliſhed.—But though I flatter myſelf that I have " proved epiſcopacy to be an apoſtolical inſtitution; yet " I readily acknowledge, that there is no precept in the " New Teſtament, which commands that every church " ſhould be governed by biſhops. No church can exiſt " without ſome government. But though there muſt be " rules and orders for the proper diſcharge of the offices " of public worſhip; though there muſt be fixed regu- " lations concerning the appointment of miniſters; and " though a ſubordination among them is expedient in the " higheſt degree; yet it does not follow that all theſe " things muſt be preciſely the ſame in every Chriſtian " country. They may vary with the other varying cir- " cumſtances of human ſociety; with the extent of a " country, the manners of its inhabitants, the nature of " its civil government, and many other peculiarities " which might be ſpecified. As it has not pleaſed our " Almighty Father to preſcribe any particular form of " civil government for the ſecurity of temporal comforts " to his rational creatures: ſo neither has he preſcribed " any particular form of eccleſiaſtical polity as abſolutely " neceſſary to the attainment of eternal happineſs. The " Scriptures do not preſcribe any definite form of church-

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the whole body of Engliſh clergy is diſtributed, were inſtituted by the apoſtles, is a fact too plain to require a formal proof. The deacons were inferior to the prieſts; they were authoriſed to baptiſe; they aſſiſted in the adminiſtration of the ſacrament, but were not permitted to conſecrate the bread and wine: and they were ſpecially entruſted with the care of the poor. The ſeveral functions of our prieſts and deacons are in no eſſential point different from the correſponding offices of ſimilar miniſters of the church in primitive times. The ſilence of the Scriptures, and the uſages of the antient church, ſanctioned the appointment of archbiſhops, archdeacons, and other eccleſiaſtical officers; whenever the appointment appeared, as the numbers of Chriſtians were multiplied, beneficial to the intereſts of religion. If any ſtate ſhould be of opinion, that to give to ſome of its leading eccleſiaſtics a ſhare in the

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" government." Biſhop Pretyman's Elements of Chriſtian Theology, vol. ii. p. 383. 396. 398.

legiſlative authority would alſo advance the intereſts of religion; there is no ſcriptural objection to the plan. Thus England ſtations its biſhops in the upper houſe of parliament. Obſerve, however, that the clergy in England, form not a diſtinct body from their fellow-ſubjects. They are amenable to the ſame laws: they pay the ſame contribution to taxes: they ſuffer the ſame puniſhment for crimes. The property which they poſſeſs as clergymen, from the biſhop to the curate, is the ſalary of an office: and the ſucceſſion to it is open to any family in the kingdom.

But why are the clergy to have ſalaries? Why? Upon the ſcriptural principal of univerſal juſtice; that "the labourer is worthy "of his reward;" that he who labours ſhould live by his labour; that he who employs his time and his talents for the benefit of others ſhould receive from them an adequate retribution. Is not this general principal applicable to the clergy? Jeſus Chriſt himſelf has applied it to them: "The

"The Lord hath ordained, that they which "preach the Goſpel ſhould live of the "Goſpel (*b*)."

But, although the clergy ought to be ſupported; why ſhould not they be left, as in apoſtolical times, to the voluntary ſupport of their congregations? Becauſe in theſe days, voluntary ſupport, it is to be feared, would too often be no ſupport. Through the affectionate zeal of the Chriſtians towards their paſtors in early ages, legal proviſions were needleſs: and if they had been neceſſary, they could not have been obtained from Pagan law-givers. At preſent, ſuch affectionate zeal would be very rare. Even by many of the Engliſh diſſenters, whom the exiſtence of an eſtabliſhed church of another perſuaſion naturally ſtimulates to exertions in behalf of their own clergy; the inadequate payment of their miniſters is lamented. The law, therefore, interpoſes with reſpect to the national church to prevent the many injuries

(*b*) 1 Cor. ix. 13.

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to religion, which would reſult from general poverty in the clergy: and the temptations to remedy that poverty by conciliating accommodation of doctrine and practice to the humour of wealthy ſubſcribers.

But the revenues of the church are exceſſive! The great Lord Chatham was not of your opinion. "The church," ſaid he, "God bleſs it! has but a pittance." Calculate the whole annual revenue of the church, and the number of the clergy: compute what the former would produce, if equally divided, to each of the latter: conſider the neceſſary expences of a clerical education: recollect that a clergyman is properly excluded from ordinary occupations and their profits; and you will not think that Lord Chatham was in the wrong. But their revenues are unequally divided! Are you ſure that religion would derive advantage from their equalization?

But tythes are an objectionable mode of paying the clergy! It is true: and what mode of payment would be unobjectionable? What, however, are your objections to tythes? They impede agricultural improvements; and they occaſion diſſenſions between the clergy and their pariſhioners. I admit that your firſt objection is not without its weight; though I believe that weight to be commonly overrated. For it is not according to human nature, that men ſhould very frequently decline to improve their eſtates nine pounds a-year, becauſe another perſon would be entitled to the tenth pound. Even if the owner, by expending the ſame ſum in another way, could ſecure the tenth pound to himſelf; the ſatisfaction of improving his own permanent landed property would in moſt caſes turn the ſcale. The ſecond objection is, I confeſs, ſo forcible, that I have only to avow my ſincere regret that no practicable means of providing for the clergy leſs objectionable than tythes have yet been diſcovered and propoſed. But

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when I make this avowal, juſtice, not profeſſional prejudice, requires me to expreſs my conviction, that in by far the greater number of inſtances the diſſenſions, which we agree in deploring, ariſe from the ſelfiſh oppoſition of thoſe who are to pay tythes, not from the exorbitancy of him who demands them. Of ſeven hundred ſuits on account of tythes brought by the clergy into the court of Exchequer, from the year 1660 to 1713, ſix hundred were decided in their favour (*c*). If a new ſearch down to the preſent day were made into the records of the Exchequer, the reſult, I apprehend, would bear a teſtimony no leſs honourable. I take no credit for peculiar moderation in the clergy: but the nature of the caſe ſpeaks for itſelf. The clergyman, foreſeeing that the intereſt of himſelf and of his family in the profits of his living terminates, at the lateſt, with his life, is much more likely to relinquiſh a

(*c*) See Archbiſhop Secker's Charges, p. 129.

juſt demand, through a dread of an expenſive conteſt, than to appeal to the law in ſupport of an unreaſonable claim. And his uſual inability to fight the purſe of a wealthy lord of a manor, or that which is repleniſhed by the combination of inferior proprietors, inculcates on him the ſame leſſon.

But is it not invidious, is it not unjuſt, to take tythes from the property of diſſenters, and to give them to clergymen of another perſuaſion? A little explanation may convince you, that there is no injuſtice nor invidious intention in the matter. In the firſt place, the tythes are not required from the diſſenter as ſuch: they are an outgoing from the land (or what amounts to the ſame thing, the produce of the land) which he happens to poſſeſs. When he or his anceſtor bought the land; he bought it proportionally cheaper, becauſe it was ſubject to that outgoing. In the ſecond place, whenever the legiſlature impoſes a tax for the purpoſe of applying its produce

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to an object which it deems of national utility; the tax must be impoſed on the country at large, though many individuals may think the object to which it is to be applied uſeleſs or prejudicial. On no other principle could public meaſures be conducted. Were a land-tax impoſed for the proſecution of a war; would you exempt the land of thoſe who diſapproved the war? Or if the legiſlature believed that the inſtitution of a medical board would be of national utility, and ſhould lay a general houſe-tax for its ſupport; would it be unjuſt to require the tax from houſeholders who ſhould think unfavourably of the inſtitution? Were the legiſlature to prohibit thoſe houſeholders from employing any other than the eſtabliſhed phyſician, the caſe would be very different. But if it leaves them, though neceſſarily ſubject to the general tax, at liberty to employ any phyſician of their own; they cannot complain of being invidiouſly or unjuſtly treated. The caſe of tythes is exactly parallel. The legiſlature, deeming

the maintainance of a national church eſſential to the public good, and the only method of ſecuring the univerſal and regular performance of public worſhip in a ſuitable manner throughout the kingdom, impoſed, and continues, for its ſupport a tax on land, to be paid by the owner, whoever he may happen to be. But with the conſcience of the owner it interferes not: it leaves him at liberty to attend the national church, or any other church which he may prefer. The temptations to pretended diſſent, the complicated and endleſs colluſions which muſt enſue were the legiſlature to exempt any man from tythes who ſhould profeſs not to belong to the national church, would render ſuch a plan ſubverſive both of the national church and of ſincerity.

But why is the national church hedged round with creeds and articles? Becauſe otherwiſe it either could not exiſt at all, or could not exiſt with public utility. Would you have a pulpit open to be filled in the morning

morning by a proteſtant, in the afternoon by a catholic; to-day by a follower of Socinus; next week by a diſciple of Swedenborg? Would a congregation be edified and confirmed in "the truth as it is in Jeſus," by hearing the fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity alternately aſſerted, queſtioned, denied? In primitive times, when a variety of doctrines ſprang up among Chriſtians, particular churches perceived the neceſſity of manifeſting their opinions by drawing up creeds and confeſſions of faith. At the reformation, the church of England, like other proteſtant churches, added to the creeds adopted in its congregations a ſummary of its faith, contained in thirty-nine articles, and directed them to be preſented for the aſſent of any perſon who ſhould apply to be admitted to the office of miniſter in the church, as a teſt by which it might be known whether he accorded with the doctrines of the church. If he did not, he was of courſe an unfit perſon to be appointed one

of its public teachers. The ſame practice is continued for the ſame reaſon.

Is the eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment then, it will finally be ſaid, free from attendant imperfections and miſconduct? It is free from neither. Shall I expreſs the anſwer in other words? It is a human inſtitution adminiſtered by men. Every work of man is tinctured with imperfection; every proceeding of man with miſconduct. But what is the rational line of argument? Take the moſt obvious of examples, civil government, and apply it. A king may be oppreſſive. Is a republic likely to be leſs oppreſſive? An hereditary crown may devolve into unworthy hands. Did the condition of Poland before its downfall recommend an elective monarchy? A parliament may be miſguided or corrupted. Would you be ruled without a parliament by the deſpotiſm of an individual or of a mob? The utmoſt to be expected in a human inſtitution is, that the advantages ſhould greatly

greatly preponderate, and that diſadvantages ſhould be open to conſideration and remedy. Try the eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment and the adminiſtration of it by that rule. If afterwards you ſtill feel a doubt remaining, remember with gratitude to heaven that you live under the legiſlature of a free country; a legiſlature empowered to apply a remedy in its wiſdom to any of thoſe defects which, according to the common fate of all things below, may adhere to its nobleſt works.

CHAP. XIII.

CONCLUSION.

IF the ſummary accounts, which the preceding chapters furniſh concerning the ſeveral ſubjects of which they treat, have tended to evince the goodneſs and the providence of God, to eſtabliſh the truth of Chriſtianity, and of the proteſtant faith: to explain the nature and the utility of our eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment: the conviction thus produced may juſtly derive additional confirmation from every enquiry into the detail of thoſe topics, of which only the leading features have been ſketched. The proſecution of ſuch enquiries, as the ſource of moſt important knowledge, and of ſtedfaſt, rational, and uncontaminated faith, it is difficult to recommend with adequate ſolicitude. May the reader proſecute them, under the divine bleſſing,

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with the attention which they deſerve; and with a diſpoſition adapted to the diſcovery and to the love of truth. In the mean time, he will receive, I truſt, with candour ſome concluding, and, perhaps, not unneceſſary obſervations relative to Chriſtian faith and Chriſtian practice.

I. Young perſons who, though little if at all inſtructed in the evidences and groundwork of Chriſtianity, have been accuſtomed, during their education, to the ſociety, the language, and the public worſhip of Chriſtians, uſually come forth into active life, not only with full perſuaſion of the truth of their religion, but with ſcarcely a ſuſpicion that there can be many perſons in this country who doubt or diſbelieve it. An avowed ſceptic, or unbeliever, is in their eyes a phenomenon like a comet. And every one who is not a notorious ſceptic or unbeliever they regard, as in faith at leaſt, though perhaps not in practice, a good Chriſtian. It may be well for them to know, without waiting until the leſſon

be inculcated by longer experience of the world, that they have formed a ſcanty conception of the number of thoſe, who take little pains to conceal their ſcepticiſm, or their unbelief; and that there exiſts in the middle and higher claſſes of ſociety a large deſcription of perſons, who, without openly rejecting Chriſtianity, can by no means be ſaid to believe it. That the number of thoſe who do not embrace the goſpel affords no argument, either againſt the truth of the religion or the goodneſs of God, is a fact which I have already had occaſion to explain (*a*). The evidence which God has ſupplied on behalf of the religion of his Son is wiſely adapted to the ſituation of moral agents, of beings in a ſtate of trial. It is not inſtantaneouſly overpowering, irreſiſtibly bearing down alike the aſſent of the prejudiced and the

(*a*) In the concluding pages of ch. 6. It may perhaps be proper to add that the ſame ſubject is further noticed in the Enquiry into the Duties of Men, &c. 4th ed. vol. ii. p. 515—520.

candid,

candid, the careleſs and the conſiderate. It ſolicits examination; it demands fair enquiry: and the fair enquirer it rewards with conviction. They who will not enquire, or who enquire not rationally and fairly, deſervedly remain in their blindneſs. This obſervation belongs to the perſons recently deſcribed as not openly rejecting Chriſtianity, no leſs than to its avowed oppoſers. They came forward into life, as you perhaps are coming forward, with an extremely ſuperficial knowledge of their religion, but without any doubt of its divine authority. In no long time they began to hear indirect cavils and witty ſarcaſms aimed againſt detached paſſages in the Scriptures; intimations dropped with a ſignificant air of ſagacity about prieſtcraft; and expreſſions of wonder that the indulgence of natural inclinations ſhould ever be a ſin. Their ears, at firſt a little ſhocked, ſoon became familiar to the ſound; and learned, by degrees, not to be offended at plainer language. Direct charges of abſurdity,

falſehood, and impoſture advanced, firſt againſt the Old Teſtament, then againſt the New, though they did not produce conviction, were heard without emotion. In the mean time the prejudices of education in favor of religion, for in theſe perſons, uninſtructed in the grounds of Chriſtianity, belief was nothing more than a prejudice, were gradually looſened. Habits of life too, perhaps, were formed, which rendered the truth of Chriſtianity, and the conſequent certainty of future puniſhment for vice, highly undeſirable. However that might be, the man grew abſorbed in the buſineſs or the trifles of the world. Political purſuits, profeſſional occupations, his regiment, or his veſſel, or his compting-houſe, or his ſhop; or his hounds and horſes, his gun, his company at home, his viſits abroad, filled up his whole time. Religion grew more and more foreign to his thoughts. Not that he decidedly diſbelieved it. He felt, when it croſſed his mind, doubts of its truth, and a ſecret wiſh that it might not be true: he felt the

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moſt prepoſterous of all perſuaſions, that poſſibly there might be *ſomething* of truth in it, but that certainly there was much leſs than was repreſented: but he had not thought on the ſubject ſufficiently to diſbelieve it altogether, or to have any clear opinion. Yet perhaps he was now and then ſeen at church; at leaſt in the country, when he had nothing to do: for he was deſirous of preſerving a reſpectable appearance; and he was convinced that religion, true or falſe, ſhould be encouraged among the lower people to keep them in order, particularly in theſe days of Jacobiniſm. Suſpicions too of the poſſibility of the truth of Chriſtianity had ſtill hung about him: and at times he had half intended to examine into the matter. Once or twice a fit of ſickneſs, or a domeſtic affliction, had encreaſed his ſurmiſes: and he had determined that at ſome future convenient opportunity he would endeavour to ſatisfy himſelf. But the convenient opportunity never happened to arrive. Days, months, and years found him occupied as before: and death ſurpriſed

priſed him at láſt in his gray hairs, uncertain of his faith. I do not ſpeak lightly, when I expreſs my apprehenſions that of the leading features in this picture many originals are to be found. The guilt of ſuch conduct, like all other guilt, may be diminiſhed or aggravated by attendant circumſtances. How is it in the preſent caſe? Was the object in queſtion unimportant? The eternal ſalvation of the individual was at ſtake. But had he means of information, and encouragements to uſe them? He lived in an enlightened age; in a proteſtant country; he lived where the Scriptures are open, and enquiry free, to every man; where the moſt eminent learning and talents have devoted themſelves to the defence of Chriſtianity; where religion is publickly reverenced, and genuine piety the moſt honourable diſtinction.

To ſet before you this example, is to warn you againſt its dangerous contagion; and to impreſs you with the duty of warning,

ing, on fit occaſions, and with the earneſtneſs of a Chriſtian, thoſe whom it may be likely to infect.

As long as you remain upon earth, a ſcene of probation, it is reaſonable to expect that your faith no leſs than your conduct ſhould be ſubjected to trial. When you have been convinced on rational grounds that Chriſtianity is true; be not haſtily ſtaggered by ſlight difficulties, which Providence allows to exiſt probably for the very purpoſe of exerciſing your faith. I do not mean that you ſhould neglect them. Bring them to the teſt of enquiry. Count as nothing the peremptory aſſertions, with which they are advanced; the concluſions ſophiſtically and dogmatically deduced from them; the ſneers and the contempt aimed at all perſons who acquieſce not in thoſe concluſions. Examine the difficulty itſelf with care: conſult thoſe who are moſt converſant with the ſubject. You will either find

the difficulty vaniſh, perhaps that it even affords a new atteſtation to Chriſtianity (*b*): or that whatever may yet be unexplained to

(*b*) Thus the boaſted antiquity of Indian Chronology, which has been ſo often triumphantly announced as a concluſive proof of the falſehood of the Moſaic hiſtory, is not only diſproved by the labours of Mr. Maurice and Sir William Jones; but is ſhewn to bear unexpected teſtimony to the truth of that hiſtory. For the very earlieſt period of that antiquity, as recorded in the moſt ſacred book of the Bramins, produces a narrative, which no man who remembers his Bible can read without perceiving it to be a tranſcript of the ſingular tranſactions of Noah and his three ſons.

Another example of the futility of an argument ſtill heard againſt the Moſaic Chronology may ſuggeſt to the reader ſome uſeful inferences with reſpect to other arguments and theories now afloat.

Mr. Brydone, in his Travels through Sicily and Malta, writes thus concerning the neighbourhood of Etna. "Near to a vault, which is now thirty feet below ground, "and has probably been a burial-place, there is a draw-"well; where there are ſeveral ſtrata of lavas with earth "to a conſiderable thickneſs over the ſurface of each ſtra-"tum. Recupero has made uſe of this as an argument "to prove the great antiquity of the eruptions of his "mountain. For if it requires 2000 years or upwards "to form but a ſcanty ſoil on the ſurface of a lava," (a calculation framed, I believe, from the eruption of Veſuvius which deſtroyed Herculaneum,) "there muſt "have

to you weighs leſs, when compared with the evidence of Chriſtianity, than a grain of ſand in the balance againſt a mountain.

On

" have been more than that ſpace of time betwixt each " of the eruptions which have formed theſe ſtrata. But " what ſhall we ſay of a pit they ſunk near to Jaci of a " great depth? They pierced thro' ſeven diſtinct lavas " one under the other, the ſurfaces of which were parallel, " and moſt of them covered with a thick bed of rich earth. " Now, ſays he, the eruption which formed the loweſt of " theſe lavas, if we may be allowed to reaſon from ana- " logy, muſt have flowed from the mountain at leaſt " 14,000 years ago. Recupero tells me he is exceedingly " embarraſſed by theſe diſcoveries in writing the hiſtory " of the mountain: that Moſes hangs like a dead weight " upon him, and blunts all his zeal for enquiry: for that " really he has not the conſcience to make his mountain " ſo young as that prophet makes the world. What do " you think of theſe ſentiments from a Roman catholic " divine? The Biſhop, who is ſtrenuouſly orthodox— " for it is an excellent ſee—has already warned him to be " upon his guard, and not to pretend to be a better na- " tural hiſtorian than Moſes; nor to preſume to urge " any thing that may in the ſmalleſt degree be deem- " ed contradictory to his ſacred authority." Vol. i. p. 140—142. To this argument a ſatisfactory anſwer has been given: that different lavas may be mouldered into ſoil, by the action of the air, within very different periods proportioned to the hardneſs of the lava: and that theſe ſuppoſed beds of rich earth are nearly or altogether beds of

On the ſubject of faith I have yet to ſubmit an additional obſervation. You will

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aſhes, which might immediately ſucceed the lava, and be almoſt immediately fit for cultivation: and that it is poſſible that ſeveral alternate ſtrata of lava and aſhes might be formed even during the ſame eruption. The material parts of this anſwer are confirmed by the obſervations of Swinburne, (Travels in the Two Sicilies, 2d edit. vol. iv. p. 141.) who incidentally ſays, that the ſmaller mountains thrown up by eruptions on the flanks of Etna are *ſoon* covered with wood planted with vines: and that, while a lava which flowed in 1669 had not yet a blade of graſs or a fibre of moſs on its ſurface, another which had flowed only 20 years ago, was already in many places covered with lichens. The Sicilian biſhop then ſeems to have had better reaſons for his orthodoxy than the excellence of his ſee. But there is a deciſive witneſs againſt Mr. Brydone, who, as far as I know, has not yet been produced: I mean Mr. Brydone himſelf. Speaking of the country near Hybla, (vol. i. p. 172, 173,) he gives the following recital.

"It was ſo *celebrated for its fertility*, and particularly for "its honey, that it was called Mel Paſſi, till it was "overwhelmed by the lava of Etna: *and having then* "*become totally barren*, by a kind of pun its name was "changed to Mal Paſſi. *In a ſecond eruption by a ſhower* "*of aſhes from the mountain, it ſoon reſumed its antient* "*beauty and fertility*; and for many years was called Bel "Paſſi. Laſt of all, in 1669, it was again laid under an "ocean of fire and reduced to the moſt wretched ſteri-"lity; ſince which time, it is known again by its ſecond "appel-

will meet among believers in Chriſtianity with perſons who appear to think, that if by forced explanations they can repreſent ſome ſcriptural narration as an allegory, or pare away the corner of a miracle; they

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" appellation of Mal Paſſi. However, the lava, in its " courſe over this beautiful country, has left ſeveral little " iſlands or hillocks, juſt enough to ſhew what it for- " merly was. Theſe make a ſingular appearance, in all " the bloom of luxuriant vegetation, ſurrounded and ren- " dered almoſt inacceſſible by large fields of black and " rugged lava."—" The firſt eruption which deſtroyed " the country of Mel Paſſi is of very old date. It deſtroyed " particularly two noble churches, regretted much on ac- " count of three ſtatues in them, which were reckoned the " moſt perfect in the iſland.—They have been ſearched for " in vain." P. 174. I have examined ſeveral authors with- out ſucceſs, to diſcover the date of this firſt eruption. By the particulars, however, which Mr. Brydone ſpecifies con- cerning the churches, it muſt have been very far poſterior to the Chriſtian æra: and apparently muſt have been ſubſequent to the recovery of Sicily from the Mahomet- ans in the eleventh century; as it ſeems impoſſible to ſuppoſe that *ſtatues* in churches ſhould eſcape their fury throughout a period of nearly two hundred and fifty years, during which they were maſters of the iſland. At any rate there cannot be a more complete demolition of the calculations of Recupero, than that which Mr. Bry- done here furniſhes unawares.

lighten the difficulties of religion to reaſoning believers and unbelievers. The attempt, however well intended, is palpably moſt abſurd. Miracles are the foundation of Chriſtianity. The ſcriptural hiſtory is a hiſtory of miracles. What if one miracle out of an hundred could be ſolved into natural cauſes? Would thoſe who were ſtaggered by an hundred be more willing, is it reaſonable that they ſhould be more willing, to credit the ninety-nine? Receive with ſubmiſſion the hiſtory of mankind as it is in Scripture, and the Chriſtian faith "as it is in Jeſus." In your preſent ſtage of exiſtence there will neceſſarily be parts of the Divine councils and diſpenſations, which you "ſee as through a glaſs darkly (c)." Why needs your faith to be troubled, be the amount ſomewhat leſs or more?

II. That practice is Chriſtian practice, which proceeds from Chriſtian motives. He, who performs the duties of morality, becauſe he ſees that it is the cuſtom to per-

(c) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

form them, is a punctual imitator; and may be deſtitute of religion. He, who performs them for the ſake of worldly intereſt, is a prudent man; and may be an unprincipled hypocrite. He, who is obſervant of ſuch of them as the laws of honour condeſcend to ſanction, is "a man "of honour;" and may be a villain. He, who in conformity to the dictates of cuſtom, or of prudence, (I ſpeak not of honour, for it meddles not with the ſubject,) attends to the outward duties of Chriſtian worſhip, has no claim to the reward of a Chriſtian. Numbers belonging to one or other of theſe deſcriptions you will hear celebrated in the world as moſt reſpectable perſons: for, "man looketh "on the outward appearance, but the "Lord looketh on the heart (*d*)." Leave ſuch characters, for even yet they may be awakened and reclaimed, to the forbearance and mercy of an offended God: but make it the buſineſs of your life not to be like to them. Love and gratitude to God and

(*d*) 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

your Redeemer muſt be your ruling principle, if you are really a Chriſtian. Every duty which you perform on that principle, your God and Redeemer will reward. For any duty which you perform on ſome other principle, on what pretence can you expect a reward from them?

The ways of religion "are ways of plea-"ſantneſs; and all her paths are peace (*e*)." Unqueſtionably they are. They may be intricate, and craggy, and ſtrewed with thorns: but they are ſurrounded with "joy "unſpeakable, and full of glory (*f*);" with "the peace of God which paſſeth all "underſtanding (*g*)." But do you forget that there will be intricacies, craggy obſtacles, and thorns? Do you imagine that, after all that Chriſt has done, nothing on your part is neceſſary for the attainment of ſalvation? Or do you think that whatever you may have to do, the Divine grace, promiſed to fervent prayer, will enable you to perform without difficulty? Why

(*e*) Prov. iii. 17. (*f*) 1 Pet. i. 8. (*g*) Phil. iv. 7.

then do the Scriptures ſpeak of the life of a Chriſtian as a warfare? Why do they ſpeak of "denying yourſelf;" of "taking "up the croſs;" of "crucifying the fleſh "with its affections and luſts;" of "wreſt-"ling againſt principalities and powers of "darkneſs;" of "putting on the whole "armour of God, that you may be able "to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil?" If, with the aſſiſtance which God has promiſed to afford, you will not manfully "fight the good fight of faith;" if you will not watchfully purſue, through whatever intricacies, the path of duty; if you will not ſtrenuouſly labour to ſurmount the obſtacles which impede your Chriſtian courſe; if you will not patiently and cheerfully ſuſtain the thorns, with which the ways of religion are ſtrewed: if you will not "endure hardneſs," call not yourſelf "a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt (*b*)."— "The Captain of your ſalvation was made "perfect through ſufferings (*i*)." He ſuffered for you, leaving you an example

(*b*) 2 Tim. ii. 3. (*i*) Heb. ii. 10.

that

that you ſhould follow his ſteps (*k*). He may call you, as he did his primitive ſervants, to "reſiſt" his enemies and thoſe of your ſoul even "unto blood (*l*)." You are not the faithful ſervant of Chriſt, unleſs you are wholly his ſervant; prepared to relinquiſh all things, to bear all things, for him. He calls you, and every one of his ſervants, to reſiſt and overcome "the "world:" its ridicule no leſs than its applauſe, its ſmiles no leſs than its frowns, its allurements no leſs than its indignation. Try then habitually the principles on which you act, the line of conduct which you purſue, the ends at which you aim, not by the rule of worldly cuſtom, of worldly intereſt, of worldly praiſe; but by the Goſpel of Chriſt. Aſk yourſelf with reſpect to every undertaking, with reſpect to every mode of proceeding and every diſpoſition of heart with which you proſecute that undertaking, whether Chriſt on his throne of judgement will approve it. If you can-

(*k*) 1 Pet. ii. 21. (*l*) Heb. xii. 4.

not

not anſwer that queſtion to the ſatisfaction of your conſcience, deſiſt: whatever advantage you abandon, whatever detriment, whatever ſcorn, you incur, deſiſt. "What "ſhall it profit you, if you gain the whole "world," all its wealth, all its honours, all its pleaſures, all its praiſe, "and loſe "your own ſoul (*m*)?" Would you confeſs Chriſt in the face of perſecution and death? Confeſs Him then in the face of ſmaller evils, of ſmaller ſacrifices. Hear and remember throughout life his own words. "Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me "before men; him will I confeſs alſo be-"fore my Father which is in heaven. But "whoſoever ſhall deny me before men; "him will I alſo deny before my Father "which is in heaven (*n*)."

(*m*) Mark, viii. 36. (*n*) Matt. x. 32, 33.

THE END.



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